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# VIAGGI D'INTELLIGENZA NELLO SPACIO







ROME  
AND  
THE RENAISSANCE  
THE PONTIFICATE OF JULIUS II

FROM THE FRENCH OF  
JULIAN KLACZKO

AUTHORISED TRANSLATION BY  
JOHN DENNIE  
AUTHOR OF "ROME OF TO-DAY AND YESTERDAY"

With 52 Illustrations

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS  
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1903



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# CONTENTS.

## CHAPTER I.

### MELOZZO'S FRESCO (1475).

	PAGE
The Popes of the Renaissance.—Sixtus IV.—Platina and the humanists of the Vatican.—The <i>Nepoti</i> .—Giuliano della Rovere, Cardinal of San Pietro in Vincoli . . . . .	I

## CHAPTER II.

### THE STORY OF A TOMB (1505-1506).

Gigantic design of the <i>Sepoltura</i> (April, 1505).—Question of its place.—Decision to rebuild S. Peter's.—The <i>Rovinante</i> .—Laying of the corner-stone of the new Basilica (April 18, 1506).—Michelangelo's flight from Rome (April 17, 1506) . . . . .	10
--	----

## CHAPTER III.

### THE OLD BASILICA (1505).

The <i>Mons Vaticanus</i> .—The mediæval S. Peter's.—The steps, the <i>atrium</i> , the <i>quadriporticus</i> , and the <i>cantharus</i> .—Construction of the interior.—The <i>Confessio</i> , the <i>Cancelli</i> , and the <i>Cathedra Petri</i> .—The oratories of the four Great Relics.—Tombs of the Popes.—The <i>Sagre Grotte</i> . . . . .	28
---	----

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE STATUE AT BOLOGNA (1506-1507).

Julius II.'s first "crusade," taking of Perugia and Bologna.—Terrors and hallucinations of Michelangelo.—He talks of taking service with the Sultan.—Is compelled to come to Bologna (Nov., 1506).—Bronze statue of the Pope for the façade of San Petronio.—Inaugurated Feb. 21, 1508; the statue is destroyed in 1511 . . . . .	47
---	----

## CHAPTER V.

## ON THE THRESHOLD OF THE SISTINA (1508).

	PAGE
Return of Michelangelo to Rome (March, 1508).—He begins work (May 10th).—Original relations between the Pope and the artist.—The question of money.—Michelangelo's family pride.—His portrait.—His character.—Influence of Rome upon his genius . . . . .	58

## CHAPTER VI.

## ROMAN MARBLES (1496-1508).

Michelangelo's first residence in Rome (1496-1499).—The antique marbles.—The <i>Apollo</i> of the Belvedere.—The <i>Pietà</i> and Savonarola's downfall (1498-1499).—The three great principles derived by Michelangelo from classic sculpture.—Discovery of the <i>Laocoon</i> (Jan. 14, 1506) . . . . .	77
---	----

## CHAPTER VII.

## A VIEW OF THE RINASCIMENTO.

The Genius of Antiquity and the Cinquecento . . . . .	97
---	----

## CHAPTER VIII.

## A FAMILY SANCTUARY (1505-1508).

Nero's tomb on the Pincio.—Santa Maria del Popolo.—Andrea Sansovino.—The monuments of Cardinal Ascanio Sforza and Cardinal Girolamo Basso.—Character of these two works.—The mausoleum of the Medici and the <i>Pietà</i> of the Cathedral of Florence . . . . .	103
--	-----

## CHAPTER IX.

## "BELVEDERE" (1509).

Donato Bramante da Urbino.—His character.—Unreasonably hated by Michelangelo.—Bramante's Lombard past.—His arrival in Rome (1500).—His new style.—The <i>Tempietto</i>	
--	--

# Contents.

v

PAGE

(1502).—The cloister of the Pace (1504).—Cardinal Oliviero Caraffa.—Bramante in the service of Julius II.—S. Peter's, San Biagio, and the "Belvedere."—The Court of San Damaso, the <i>Nicchione</i> , and the winding staircase.—Julius II.'s <i>Viridarium</i> . . . . .	117
--	-----

## CHAPTER X.

### MIRABILIA (1509).

Bulletin from the army of Charles VIII. (1495)—Roman guide-books in the Middle Ages.—The <i>Mirabilia</i> of Canon Albertini (1509).—The <i>Nova Urbs</i> .— <i>Li Nuptiali</i> of Marcantonio Altieri (1509) . . . . .	142
---	-----

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE "UPPER ROOMS" (1508-1509).

I. The appartamento Borgia and the <i>Camera superiores</i> .—Perugino's ceiling.—Arrival of Raffaello.—II. The two great powers of the painter of the Stanze.—The pre-Roman Raffaello.—The <i>Deposizione</i> of the Borghese Gallery and the frescos of the first Stanza. . . . .	151
---	-----

## CHAPTER XII.

### IN THE CAMERA DELLA SEGNAURA (1509-1511).

I. The hypothesis of a Library.—The Signatura, a high court of appeal.—The Cambio in Perugia.—Sigismondo de' Conti and Tommaso Inghirami.—II. The symbolic and synthetic painting of the Trecento.—Raffaello's innovation.—The four great medallions.—The <i>Disputa</i> .—III. The seven disciplines of the <i>trivium</i> and <i>quadrivium</i> in Italian Art.—Raffaello's innovation.—The <i>disciplina disciplinarum</i> .—Aristotle and Plato.—The architecture of the <i>Scuola d'Atene</i> and the future S. Peter's.—IV. The <i>Parnasso</i> —Mantegna's picture and Raffaello's fresco.—The <i>Homer</i> and the <i>Apollo</i> .—The three <i>Cardinal Virtues</i> .—Roman Law and Canon Law: <i>Pandects</i> and <i>Decretals</i> .—Restorations in the Camera della Segnatura . . . . .	170
---	-----

## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE WORLD'S GAME (1509-1512).

PAGE

- I. The League of Cambrai and the battle of Agnadello (May 14, 1509).—The absolution of Venice (Feb. 24, 1510) — Louis XII.'s exasperation.—*Fuori i barbari!* (May 17, 1510).—II. The camp at Bologna.—Appearance of Julius II. during this war.—Taking of Mirandola (Jan. 21, 1511)—Europe and Italy.—Disapproval of the Pope's beard.—Revolt of Bologna and defeat of the pontifical army (May 21, 1511).—The assassination of Cardinal Alidosi (May 24, 1511).—La Magliana.—The Convento dei Penitenzieri.—*Conciliabulum* of Pisa.—Julius II.'s return to Rome (June 27, 1511).—III. Bull *Sacro sanctæ* (July 28, 1511).—Secret negotiations and artistic interests of the Pope (July-August).—His serious illness (Aug. 17).—Pompeo Colonna and the proposal to establish a Republic (Aug. 27th).—Federico Gonzaga, the young hostage.—The recovery of the Pope and proclamation of the Holy League (Oct. 5th).—Gaston de Foix, and the winter campaign of 1512.—Battle of Ravenna (Apr. 11, 1512).—Alarm at Rome and great remonstrance of the cardinals (April 14th).—Descent of the Swiss and expulsion of the French (May-June).—Triumph of Julius II.—Council of the Lateran and *Te Deum* of Dec. 3, 1512.—The three portraits of Julius II. in the Stanze . . . 218

## CHAPTER XIV.

## UNDER THE SISTINE VAULT (1508-1511).

- I. Michelangelo's "bridge."—The Tuscan *frescanti*.—The labour of three years.—Julius II.'s return to Rome (June 27, 1511).—Partial view of the frescos in the week of the Assumption (1511).—Universal enthusiasm.—The voice of Savonarola.—II. The frieze of the Sistina and the paintings of the vault.—The Old Testament with Michelangelo's predecessors.—The *Jehovite* spirit.—*Genesis*.—The *Prophets* and *Sibyls*.—III. The decorative element.—Reliefs, Caryatides, and statues.—The figures in camaieu, the *Putti*, and the *Ignudi* . . . . . 270

# Contents.

vii

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE SECOND STANZA (1511-1512).

PAGE

- I. The vespers of Orvieto (Sept. 7, 1506).—Programme of the second Stanza (Sept., 1511).—The leading thought of the reign.—II. The four biblical subjects of the ceiling.—Their Michelangelesque aspect and decorative character.—III. *La Messa di Bolsena*.—The figure of Julius II.—The *sacerdos teutonicus* of the year 1512.—IV. *La Storia di Eliodoro*.—Extraordinary impetuosity of the scene.—The architecture of the temple.—V. Unity of the second Stanza.—Its dramatic style.—Its colouring.—Collaboration of pupils . . . . . 318

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE EPILOGUE OF THE VAULT (1512)

- I. The year of terror.—The Congress of Mantua, and the restoration of the Medici to Florence (June-August, 1512).—Letters of Michelangelo during this year.—II. The *Ancestors of Christ*.—The *Capricci*.—Vigil of All Saints (1512).—III. Bitter feeling of Michelangelo.—The *Slave* of the Louvre (1513) . . . . . 341

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE LAST CARNIVAL (FEB., 1513).

- Death of Julius II. . . . . 360

- INDEX . . . . . 367



## ILLUSTRATIONS

NOTE.—The photographs reproduced for this work are (with two exceptions: the “Bound Captive” and the “Portrait of Raffaello”) from the atelier of Messrs. Alinari, Florence.

STUDY FOR PORTRAIT OF JULIUS II.	
( <i>Raffaello</i> ) . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
Corsini Gallery, Florence	
	FACING PAGE
SIXTUS IV. GIVING AUDIENCE TO PLATINA ( <i>Melozzo da Forlì</i> ) . . . . .	4
Vatican Gallery	
DETAIL OF FRESCO: CARDINAL DELLA ROVERE . . . . .	8
STATUE OF MOSES ( <i>Michelangelo</i> ) . . . . .	16
Church of San Pietro in Vincoli	
BOUND CAPTIVE ( <i>Michelangelo</i> ) . . . . .	22
Museum of the Louvre, Paris	
A VICTORY ( <i>Michelangelo</i> ) . . . . .	26
Bargello, Florence	
TAPESTRY FROM CARTOON BY RAFFAELLO . . . . .	36
Galleria degli Arrazzi, Vatican	
PORTRAIT OF MICHELANGELO ( <i>artist unknown</i> ) . . . . .	48
Gallery of the Capitol	
CAPPELLA SISTINA . . . . .	58
Vatican Palace	



	FACING PAGE
PORTRAIT OF CARDINAL BIBBIENA ( <i>Raffaello</i> ) Pitti Gallery, Florence	66
STATUE OF APOLLO . . . . . Vatican Museum	78
LA PIETÀ ( <i>Michelangelo</i> ) . . . . . Basilica of San Pietro	82
STATUE OF DAVID ( <i>Michelangelo</i> ) . . . . . Accademia, Florence	88, 94
LAOCOON . . . . . Vatican Museum	100
CHURCH OF SANTA MARIA DEL POPOLO . . . . .	104
MONUMENT OF CARDINAL PALLAVICINI . . . . . Church of Santa Maria del Popolo	108
MONUMENT OF CARDINAL ASCANIO SFORZA ( <i>San-</i> <i>sovino</i> ) . . . . . Church of Santa Maria del Popolo	112
DETAIL OF LA DISPUTA: BRAMANTE ( <i>Raffaello</i> ) . . . . . Stanza della Segnatura, Vatican	118
LA TEMPIETTO . . . . . Cortile of San Pietro in Montorio	128
DETAIL OF IL PARNASSO, I ( <i>Raffaello</i> ) . . . . . Stanza della Segnatura	140
STANZA DELLA SEGNAURA . . . . . Vatican Palace	152
PORTRAIT OF RAFFAELLO ( <i>by himself</i> ) . . . . . Gallery of the Louvre, Paris	162

# Illustrations

xi

FACING  
PAGE

CEILING OF THE STANZA DELLA SEGNATURA ( <i>Raffaello</i> ) . . . . .	170
DETAIL OF CEILING : LA THEOLOGIA . . . . .	176
LA DISPUTA DEL SACRAMENTO ( <i>Raffaello</i> ) . . . . .	182
Stanza della Segnatura	
DETAIL OF LA DISPUTA, 2 . . . . .	188
DETAIL OF LA DISPUTA, 3 . . . . .	194
LA SCUOLA D' ATENE ( <i>Raffaello</i> ) . . . . .	196
Stanza della Segnatura	
DETAIL OF LA SCUOLA, 1 . . . . .	198
DETAIL OF LA SCUOLA, 2 . . . . .	202
DETAIL OF LA SCUOLA, 3 . . . . .	204
IL PARNASSO ( <i>Raffaello</i> ) . . . . .	206
Stanza della Segnatura	
DETAIL OF IL PARNASSO, 2 . . . . .	210
THE CARDINAL VIRTUES ( <i>Raffaello</i> ) . . . . .	212
Stanza della Segnatura	
DETAIL OF THE CARDINAL VIRTUES: LA TEMPERANTIA . . . . .	216
DETAIL OF LA SCUOLA: FRANCESCO MARIA DELLA ROVERE, 4 . . . . .	226
GREGORY IX. PROCLAIMING THE DECRETALS ( <i>Raffaello</i> ) . . . . .	234
Stanza della Segnatura	
THE ERYTHRÆAN SIBYL ( <i>Michelangelo</i> ) . . . . .	244
Cappella Sistina	

	FACING PAGE
THE PROPHET EZEKIEL ( <i>Michelangelo</i> ) . . .	256
Cappella Sistina	
THE LIBYAN SIBYL ( <i>Michelangelo</i> ) . . .	264
Cappella Sistina	
THE PROPHET DANIEL ( <i>Michelangelo</i> ) . . .	274
Cappella Sistina	
THE DELPHIC SIBYL ( <i>Michelangelo</i> ) . . .	284
Cappella Sistina	
DETAIL OF CREATION OF ADAM ( <i>Michelangelo</i> ) .	294
Cappella Sistina	
THE PROPHET ISAIAH ( <i>Michelangelo</i> ) . . .	304
Cappella Sistina	
ONE OF THE IGNUDI ( <i>Michelangelo</i> ) . . .	312
Cappella Sistina	
THE MASS OF BOLSENA ( <i>Raffaello</i> ) . . .	326
Stanza di Eliodoro, Vatican Palace	
THE PUNISHMENT OF HELIODORUS . . .	332
Stanza di Eliodoro	
DETAIL OF DELIVERANCE OF S. PETER . . .	338
Stanza di Eliodoro	
THE ANCESTORS OF CHRIST ( <i>Michelangelo</i> ) . .	348
Cappella Sistina	
PORTRAIT OF JULIUS II. ( <i>Raffaello</i> ) . . .	358
Pitti Gallery, Florence	
TOMB OF SIXTUS IV. . . . .	362
Basilica di San Pietro	

## CHRONOLOGY

- 1496-1500.** First residence of Michelangelo in Rome.
- 1498.** (May 23). Death of Savonarola.
- 1498-99.** Michelangelo's *Pietà* for Cardinal Villiers de la  
Gros-laie.
- 1500.** Michelangelo's return to Florence.  
" Bramante at Rome.
- 1502.** The *Tempietto*, Bramante's first work in Rome.
- 1503.** (November). Julius II. elected Pope.  
" The portico of the Pace by Bramante.
- 1505.** Michelangelo enters the service of Julius II.  
" (March). Plan of the *Sepoltura*.  
" (April-November). Michelangelo at Carrara.  
" " Decision to rebuild S. Peter's.  
" Bramante undertakes San Biagio, the Belvedere, and the  
rebuilding of S. Peter's.  
" (December). Michelangelo's return from Carrara.
- 1506.** (January 14). Discovery of the *Laocoon*.  
" (April 17). Michelangelo's flight to Florence.  
" (April 18). Laying of corner-stone of the new S. Peter's.  
" Andrea Sansovino employed for the monument of Cardinal  
Ascanio Sforza.  
" (August 26). Julius II. marches against the Baglioni and  
Bentivogli.  
" (September 7). The vespers of Orvieto.  
" (September 16). Occupation of Perugia.  
" (November 10). Taking of Bologna.

- 1506.** (end of November). Michelangelo goes to Bologna to ask pardon from the Pope.  
 “ Begins statue of the Pope for façade of San Petronio.
- 1507.** (March 28). Julius II.'s triumphal return to Rome.  
 “ Andrea Sansovino employed for the monument of Cardinal Basso della Rovere.  
 “ (November 26). The Pope occupies the Upper Rooms of the Vatican.
- 1508.** Perugino, Sodoma, Peruzzi, and others are engaged for the decoration of the Upper Rooms.  
 “ (February 21). Inauguration of the statue at Bologna.  
 “ (end of March). Michelangelo's return to Rome.  
 “ (May 8). He begins painting in the Sistine.
- 1509.** (January?) Arrival of Raffaello in Rome.  
 “ (March). Julius II. dismisses the artists employed in the Upper Rooms and commits the decoration to Raffaello.  
 “ (March 23). The Pope joins the League of Cambrai against Venice.  
 “ (April 14). Battle of Agnadello, and humiliation of Venice.  
 “ The *Mirabilia* of Canon Albertini (finished June 5, 1509, and printed in 1510).
- 1510.** (February 24). Absolution of Venice and rupture with France.  
 “ (August 7). Julius II. goes to his headquarters at Bologna.  
 “ (October). Michelangelo at the Pope's headquarters. (He goes thither a second time near the close of the year).
- 1511.** (January 21). Taking of Mirandola.  
 “ (May 21). Revolt of Bologna, and defeat of the pontifical army.  
 “ (May 24). Assassination of Cardinal Alidosi by the Duke of Urbino.  
 “ (May). Announcement of a schismatic council at Pisa.  
 “ (June 27). Julius II.'s return to Rome.  
 “ (July 18). The bull *Sacrosanctæ* convokes a council at the Lateran for April 9, 1512.

- 1511.** (July). Julius II. negotiates for the forming of the Holy League, and poses for his portrait in the fresco of the *Decretals*.
- “ (August, week of the Assumption). Opening of the Camera della Segnatura, and partial unveiling of the Sistine vault.
- “ (August 17). Serious illness of the Pope.
- “ (August 27). Attempt at a Republic made by Roman nobles.
- “ (September). Raffaello begins the decoration of the Second Stanza, and Michelangelo resumes his work in the Sistine.
- “ (September 23). Florence laid under interdict.
- “ (October 5). Proclamation of the Holy League.
- 1512.** (January to July?) The *Mass of Bolsena*, fresco of the Second Stanza.
- “ (April 11). Battle of Ravenna.
- “ (April 14). Remonstrance of the Sacred College in favour of Peace.
- “ (May 10). First session of the Lateran Council.
- “ (May 17). Second session, and adjournment to November.
- “ (May-June). Arrival of the Swiss, and expulsion from Italy of the French.
- “ (July 4-9). Alfonso of Ferrara in Rome.
- “ (July-December?) *Punishment of Heliodorus*, fresco of the second Stanza.
- “ (August). Congress of Mantua and restoration of the Italian princes
- “ (August 29). Sack of Prato, and return of the Medici to Florence.
- “ (August-October). Completion of Michelangelo's frescos on the Sistine ceiling.
- “ (November 2). Feast of All Saints, and definitive opening of the Sistine Chapel.
- “ (November 4). The bishop of Gurk in Rome.
- “ (December 3). Third session of the Lateran Council; the *Te Deum*.
- 1513.** (February 3). Carnival and grand procession in Rome.
- “ (February 20). Death of Julius II.



# ROME AND THE RENAISSANCE

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## CHAPTER I

### MELOZZO'S FRESCO

THIS fresco by Melozzo da Forlì—*Sixtus IV., Founder of the Vatican Library*<sup>1</sup>—is a great page of history, as well as a great page of painting. It helps us marvellously to understand those Popes of the Renaissance, with all their qualities and their faults, their political rather than religious turn of mind, their humanist predilections, their passion for building and beautifying the city of Rome, their nepotism.

In the haughty old man seated there, nothing recalls the Francesco della Rovere of earlier days, the humble monk of the Order of the Minor Brethren, born of obscure parentage in Ligurian Savona. He sits like a king, in a splendid hall, surrounded by high dignitaries of Church and State, all very young,—all, furthermore, his nearest kinsmen. His profile is singularly clear-cut, and singularly hard, also—as is not unsuited to the all too clearly

<sup>1</sup> Picture gallery of the Vatican, Hall III. Melozzo's fresco was transferred to canvas early in the last century. Up to that time it had remained in its original place in the Latin Hall of Sixtus IV.'s Vatican Library (now the *Floreria*). See Paul Fabre, *La Vaticana de Sixte IV (Mélanges de l'École française à Rome, vol. xv.)*.



proven accomplice of the Pazzi. It is 1475,<sup>1</sup> and but three years later came that fatal conspiracy which was to remain the ineffaceable blot upon his pontificate. I am well aware that indulgent historians plead extenuating circumstances here: in reply to his nephew, Girolamo Riario, who had said that every endeavour would be made to prevent bloodshed, but that in enterprises of this kind there could be no certainty about this, the Pope is said to have exclaimed: "*Tu è una bestia!* I tell you I will have nobody killed in Florence, I only will have a change of government."<sup>2</sup> I confess this defence produces but little effect on me. "We cannot govern a state with paternosters," old Cosimo, the Father of his Country, loved to say, as the excuse of certain acts of violence in his rule on the banks of the Arno: Sixtus IV. must have known that it was not with paternosters that a *mutazione dello stato* could be brought about in Florence.

With the aristocratic, shrewd, cold profile of the old Rovere is ingeniously contrasted in Melozzo's picture the plebeian, square, wrinkled, sensual, and rather sly face of Platina who receives, kneeling, his investiture as Librarian, and represents here in masterly fashion that humanist tribe of the Quattrocento which had become so important and so importunate. They filled the courts, the academies and the chanceries of the peninsula; they were the official poets and publicists of governments, the

<sup>1</sup> Date of the foundation of the Library. The fresco was painted in 1477.

<sup>2</sup> Deposition of Montesecco. Capponi, *Storia di Firenze*, vol. ii., p. 552.

accredited "orators" of all illustrious embassies; and from among them the Roman Curia also drew the Ciceronian pens judged indispensable for the proper preparation of briefs and bulls. In 1464, the Vatican had no less than seventy of these *abbreviatores*, all richly paid; and when Paul II. (Barbo) felt that he must reduce their number there was a general outcry. Making himself the spokesman of his dispossessed colleagues, Bartolommeo Platina addressed an insolent letter to the pontiff, threatening him with a Council if he did not recall the decree. Nothing could equal the pride and audacity of these rhetoricians and phrase-makers who believed themselves to be the great justiciaries of history, the sole and sovereign dispensers of fame and immortality. "It was Homer who made Achilles known to the world; it was the authors of the Gospels who made known the Christ," the excellent Bartolommeo wrote, in 1468, to the Pope; he wrote from a dungeon of Sant' Angelo, charged with a capital crime and undergoing the most humiliating and degrading of punishments. It would be difficult to deny that the leaders of the Academy, Pomponius Leto, Platina, Buonaccorsi and their like, were Epicureans and free-thinkers in the full force of the term, worshipping only antiquity and the Genius of Rome, forming among themselves, as has so well been said, a sort of Free-Masonry, profoundly hostile to the Christian dogma and, in fact, to every form of revealed religion.

In a moment of frankness, or of prostration, Platina himself avowed to Pomponius that, as Head of the Church, Paul II. could not but be displeased at their

underhand proceedings. Nevertheless, the successor of Paul II. made haste to conciliate the good will of this world of lettered men, as formidable then as the world of journalists is now. Sixtus IV. fixed the number of *abbreviatores* at seventy-two, he reopened the Academy, reinstalled in his chair the famous Pomponius, and conferred on Platina the double duty of historiographer of the Popes and superintendent of the *Vaticana*. The *entente cordiale* between the Papacy and Humanism, for a moment compromised by Barbo, "the Barbarian," was renewedly affirmed by the former general of the Franciscans, and it was destined to last till the Council of Trent.

With the index finger of his right hand, Platina calls the spectator's attention to an inscription placed at the bottom of the frame; they are distichs of his own composition which, in elegant Latin, celebrate the other Roman creations of the Rovere: churches, hospitals, aqueducts, and bridges; broad streets, extensive squares, convenient harbours, and walls.<sup>1</sup> None of the Popes preceding or following Sixtus IV. did as much as he for the restoration, the sanitation, and the enlargement of the Eternal City; and it was with good reason that Albertini dates from this reign the *Nova Urbs* of his *Mirabilia*. To these great building operations, of a kind that the Seven

<sup>1</sup> *Templa, domum expositis, vicos, fora, mœnia, pontes,  
Virgineam Trivii quod repararis aquam,  
Prisca licet nautis statuas dare commoda portus  
Et Vaticanum cingere, Sixte, jugum.  
Plus tamen Urbs debet: nam, quæ squalore latebat  
Cernitur in celebri Bibliotheca loco.*









Hills had not seen since the time of the Cæsars, were added the artistic splendours of the Quattrocento: it is enough to name the magnificent cycle of frescos executed in the palace chapel by Ghirlandajo, Signorelli, Botticelli, Rosselli, Perugino, and Pinturicchio. Only one complete work of Melozzo da Forlì, unfortunately, remains in Rome, this picture of the *Vaticana*, of which we have been speaking; but it is very much to the honour of Sixtus IV. that he was able to distinguish above the rest this strong genius, perhaps the most original and innovating painter of the epoch.<sup>1</sup> We must do him also the justice to remember that the *Vaticana* was the first *public* Library, the Capitoline collection of bronzes the first *public* Museum that Italy had known, and that, while setting the example of a deplorable nepotism, the old Franciscan monk did not fail to communicate his passion for embellishing Rome to more than one of these Rovere and Riarii, who had flocked with all haste to the city that they might bask in the sunshine of their kinsman, the Ligurian Pope.

In this fresco of Melozzo, which contains in all but six figures, there are four of these "nephews"; and that alone is a sign of the times.<sup>2</sup>

The showy youth with slender figure and aquiline nose

<sup>1</sup> The tribune of the church of the Santi Apostoli in Rome, with Melozzo's paintings, was destroyed in 1711; there remain to us of them only a few admirable fragments, now in the sacristy of S. Peter's and above the stairway of the Quirinal Palace. Melozzo's chapel at Loretto is still almost entire. This is most unjustly attributed by Cavalcaselle to Palmezzano.

<sup>2</sup> Schmarzow, *Melozzo*, pp. 42 *et seq.*



## 6      Rome and the Renaissance

who stands behind Platina, wrapped in a rich cloak and wearing a heavy gold chain around his neck, is Girolamo Riario, the all-powerful favourite of the Pope and the evil genius of his reign. A petty tradesman at first or a custom-house clerk in his native city of Savona, then Count of Imola and Forlì, and husband of the famous Caterina Sforza, Girolamo was the soul of the Pazzi conspiracy and of many other violent and unfortunate enterprises of Sixtus IV. The sworn enemy of the Medici during his whole life, he was destined to perish, ten years later, by the hands of his Forlivan subjects, and to be avenged by his widow in a frightful carnage. But vain are our strifes here below, our loves as well as our hatreds: this avenging virago nevertheless married, for fourth or fifth husband, one of the most obscure of the Medici, and became the mother of Giovanni delle Bande Nere, the grandmother of Cosmo I., *lo stampo*<sup>1</sup> of the Grand Dukes of Tuscany!

A commonplace, thick-set figure, but with a very intelligent face, Giovanni della Rovere wears also rich dress, and a gold chain around his neck. He is "prefect of Rome," Lord of Sinigaglia, and will later be the ancestor of sovereigns. Thanks to the celebrity which came to him through his uncle, he was soon after to marry the heiress of the Montefeltri, and his son, Francesco Maria, will presently reign over the duchy of Urbino.

The two other *nepoti* belong to the Church. Raffaello

<sup>1</sup> *A me rimane lo stampo per farne altri!* is the traditional reply of Caterina Sforza when the Forlivians threatened, in 1488, to put to death her children if she did not surrender the castle.

Riario, at the right of Sixtus IV., is a boy scarcely sixteen, and wears merely the robe of the apostolic prothonotary; in two years he will wear the purple and will be known as the Cardinal di San Giorgio, will be the papal legate in Florence, and on Sunday, April 27, 1478, will be present in the Cathedral at "the bloody mass" of the Pazzi. Not at all aware of the plot, he will, however, be kept a prisoner for nearly two months by Lorenzo the Magnificent, will expect from moment to moment to be hung like his colleague, Archbishop Salviati, and from these days of anguish his face will contract a livid pallor lasting through life. It is he to whom will be sold in 1496, as an antique marble, a statue of Cupid, the work of the young Michelangelo, and this will bring the sculptor to Rome for the first time; we have still Buonarroti's letter, in which he speaks of the *molte belle cose* shown him by his Eminence, in the cardinal's *Casa Nuova*.<sup>1</sup>

By a singular fatality the end of the career of this Prince of the Church will be marked by the same sinister complication as was its beginning. The 29th of May, 1517, the people of Rome were to learn with amazement of the arrest of Cardinal di San Giorgio, so well known for the last forty years for his wealth, his ostentation, his cavalcades through the streets at the head of three hundred horsemen, his scenic representations, his collections of *anticaglie*, and his magnificent palace of San Lorenzo in Damaso. The accusation against this dean of the Sacred College was of having plotted, with the young Cardinal Alfonso Petrucci, the assassination of the Pope, Leo X.,

<sup>1</sup> Letter of Michelangelo, ed. Milanesi, p. 375.

by poison and poignard. Petrucci was strangled in prison; Raffaello Riario was set free from the castle of Sant' Angelo only after having paid an enormous ransom in gold and given up to the treasury the ownership of his palace, the finest in Rome.<sup>1</sup> He survived this catastrophe but a short time, dying in Naples (1521), deserted by every one.

The last of the group to be named is Giuliano della Rovere, now thirty-one years of age, originally, like his uncle, a Franciscan monk, and since 1471 Cardinal of San Pietro in Vincoli. It is upon this figure that Melozzo has concentrated all the vigour of his brush, with a presentiment, it would seem, of the great place that history was to give to his subject. What energy in the face, already so deeply marked by ambition! What fire in the glance! And, withal, a certain veiled sadness, and that unsatisfied look which comes to the elect of destiny when their star too long delays its coming.

Standing, and with face turned towards the founder of the *Vaticana*, the Cardinal holds in his hands a roll, doubtless the address which he is about to deliver to the Pope,<sup>2</sup> congratulating him upon the completion of a work which we may boldly affirm was common to them both. Kept out of politics by the superior influence, as jealous

<sup>1</sup> The palace received from that time the distinction of being the official residence of the Vice-Chancellor of the Church, and hence is called the Cancellaria. From this confiscation date the Medici arms, to be seen in many parts of the palace.

<sup>2</sup> The other roll, in the hand of Raffaello Riario, may have been supposed to contain the reply which was to be delivered by Sixtus IV.









as it was harmful, of the Count of Imola, Giuliano della Rovere was, in general, obliged to limit himself to being his uncle's adviser and inspirer in respect to all the great artistic and monumental creations of the reign. Under Innocent VIII. his influence was to be much more weighty—the ambassadors of the Powers even complaining, under Cibo, that they had “to deal with two Popes”; and in 1492 he was to be the candidate of France for the triple crown. It was, however, Alexander VI. who gained the election in that ill-omened Conclave, by means which are well known; and then began, between the nephew of Sixtus IV. and the father of Cesare Borgia, a ten-years' strife, passionate and full of exciting incidents. The Cardinal of San Pietro in Vincoli took refuge in France and urged Charles VIII. to the invasion of Italy. With the Most Christian King, he re-entered Rome, and believed himself at the goal of his wishes upon the death of Alexander. Disappointed in this hope, he again went into exile, and wasted long years in efforts more and more disappointing. At last his hour came: Alexander VI. and Pius III. being dead, the nephew of Sixtus IV. was elected Pope, in the Conclave of November 1, 1503. He was then fifty-nine years of age; and the name that he took was Julius II.



## CHAPTER II

### THE STORY OF A TOMB

I KNOW of few books that are so misleading as the *Le-gationes* of Macchiavelli in which reference is made to Julius II. The Florentine Secretary of State, being his government's envoy to the Conclave of 1503, was a witness of the election and of the first acts of the new pontiff; but he shows himself in his despatches to have been, at the time, altogether preoccupied with his admired Cesare Borgia. The Secretary had seen this young man the preceding year in Romagna, at the summit of his factitious prosperity and abominable crimes, and had conceived for him that extraordinary enthusiasm which is a matter of history. Macchiavelli now finds him a prisoner in the Vatican, powerless, humiliated, and contemptible to the last degree, and despises him accordingly; but, for all that, he still feels the early fascination and will feel it while he lives. As for this Giuliano della Rovere, who has just been raised to Saint Peter's throne (November 26, 1503),—this Julius II., soon to be called throughout Italy *il pontefice terribile*,<sup>1</sup>—the wily diplomat from the

<sup>1</sup> By the word *terribile* the Italians of the *Cinquecento* expressed the idea of a fiery enthusiasm of character, combined with a certain loftiness of ideas. They spoke of the *terribilità* in the art of Michelangelo. "*È un uomo terribile*," Leo X. said of Buonarroti, speaking to Sebastiano del Piombo.

banks of the Arno makes no great account of him. Macchiavelli has not the slightest interest in the new Pope, not even that of curiosity. He does not at all suspect that he is in the presence of an extraordinary man—an *uomo singolare*, to use a favourite expression of the times. At most, the envoy will but give him the credit and honour of some sagacious political assassination—for instance, the murder of the duc de Valentinois. A rumour to this effect is, in fact, current in Rome, and the Secretary forthwith mentions it, in an airy way: "The Pope is beginning to pay his debts, and to pay them in full." But the news, unfortunately, does not receive confirmation.

Three years later, Macchiavelli, being again an envoy to the Roman Court, on his way thither meets the Pope (at Nepi), who is marching upon Perugia and Bologna, with intent to wrest these cities from the Bentivogli and the Baglioni. Preceded by the Host and attended by two-and-twenty cardinals, this Successor of the Apostles commands his troops in person; and that, too, at a time when kings and emperors—a Maximilian of Austria, a Louis of France, a Ferdinand of Spain—remain afar from the tumult of battles and allow their generals to act for them. This piquant spectacle, however, suggests to the Tuscan envoy no original reflections, nor any apprehension whatever. Even his strong and tenacious hatred of the Church fails to give him warning that the temporal power of the Popes is about to be made secure for centuries! Certainly this statesman, this observer reputed infallible, manifests but little sagacity or foresight in the present instance. The man who does foresee—who sees,

rather—is quite another Florentine, no statesman, but a man of genius; himself, like the Pope, *terribile*. In the famous design for the monument of Julius II., made by Michelangelo at the pontiff's command and in his honour early in the reign (March, 1505), the Pope already appears, as he is destined to stand in history, a fierce conqueror of provinces and a generous patron of art—a true Pontifex Maximus of the Renaissance. But the design is silent—and with good reason—as to the Christian, the priest, the shepherd of souls!

The monument ordered is—strange to say—a tomb, a magnificent dwelling of the dead, where shall finally repose this pontiff, but yesterday elected; and he a Franciscan monk! Bramante and his friends consider the undertaking to be of evil omen; but Julius II. puts into it all the fire of his will, and Michelangelo all the ardour of his genius. A thought of Christian humility—the thought: *memento mori, memento quia pulvis es*—is, be it observed, as far from the mind of the crowned monk as from that of the immortal artist; the only motive of action, for the one as for the other, is the universal tendency of the period, the *primum mobile* of Humanism—that cult of personality, that appeal to posterity, which Dante has already called *lo gran disio dell' eccellenza*. Here, it is a Pharaoh's pride, served to its utmost desire by a Titan's daring; and that the work remained a fragment may perhaps suggest a certain Scriptural sentence about the mighty of the earth “who build unto themselves ruins . . .” Mark well, however: the association of these two fiery souls, these two *terribili*, Rovere and

Buonarroti, is nevertheless one of the greatest dates in the history of the ideal; it sums up the splendour and the disaster of the Renaissance arrived at its apogee.

It is not forbidden us to reconstruct in imagination—vaguely, it is true, and very insufficiently—the work, as the sculptor beheld it, in that first moment of inspiration and enthusiasm. We have the accounts—agreeing in general, notwithstanding some divergences—of Condivi and Vasari, the former of whom wrote under the instruction, and almost at the dictation, of Michelangelo; we have also a small pen-and-ink drawing, carefully treasured in the Uffizi, in which part of the monument (the lower part) is represented, if not by Buonarroti's own hand, at least in accordance with authentic and contemporary documents.<sup>1</sup> We may, therefore, represent to ourselves an isolated construction, accessible on all sides, measuring twenty-four feet in width, thirty-six in depth, and over thirty-six feet in height. The base, thirteen feet high, and separated from the upper part by a massive and prominent entablature, presents on all four sides a continuous succession of immense niches flanked by enormous projecting pilasters: niches and pilasters proclaiming the mundane glory of Julius II.—his glory as

<sup>1</sup> The drawing in the collection of Herr von Beckerath, at Berlin, refers to a later period, and a design considerably reduced and *attached to the wall*. It is, however, of very great interest because it gives the upper part of the mausoleum, and explains the sculptor's expression, that Julius II. was to be represented "*in sospeso*" (suspended): two angels hold him by the arms, and are lowering him into the tomb.

conqueror, and as patron of the arts. In each of the niches a winged Victory treads under foot a defeated and disarmed province; at each of the pilasters, an enchained athlete writhes, convulsed, shuddering, flinging to heaven a reproachful glance, or sinks exhausted and expiring. The two famous statues in the Louvre, so improperly called "The Slaves," were of this number. These enchained athletes personify the liberal arts, themselves become "the prisoners of death" in the death of the Rovere; their great benefactor gone, they despair and perish!

The upper part of the monument, which has a height of nine feet, lifts us towards a higher world, towards regions ideal and serene. In contrast with the Victories and athletes of the base, all represented standing and in attitudes heroic or pathetic, the eight principal statues above are either seated or stand in repose and solemn tranquillity. We distinguish among them Moses, S. Paul, Active Life, Contemplative Life, perhaps, also, Prudence and some other allegorical Virtue. In the midst rises the great sarcophagus, destined to receive the mortal remains of the Pope. At the very summit of the monument is seen Julius II. himself, "held suspended" by two angels of contrasted aspect: the Genius of the Earth is sad, and weeps the loss which has just fallen upon this lower world; the Angel of Heaven rejoices, and is proud to introduce this new-comer into the abodes of the blessed. Two other angels stoop over the pontiff's feet.

So far we have only the general outlines of this pyra-

mid in marble, with its celestial and terrestrial personages. Add to this *hermæ*, *putti*, and masks, scattered everywhere and in great numbers, and a profusion also of arabesques, flowers, fruit, and other architectural ornaments. Add, moreover, important decorations in bronze: large reliefs with divers scenes, plaques with inscriptions, balustrades. Combining the data given by Condivi with the indications in the drawing of the Uffizi, Mr. C. H. Wilson<sup>1</sup> arrives at the prodigious number of seventy-eight statues, most of them as large as the Moses of San Pietro in Vincoli, and the Slaves in the Louvre—an Ossa of giants on a Pelion of colossi. Doubtless, certain tumulary monuments of pontiffs of the Quattrocento—notably those of Nicholas V. and Pius II.—have already shown us the ever-increasing proportions of sepulchres, once so modest and simple; but to find anything like this project of a tomb we must ascend the stream of time; we must go back as far as the period of the Cæsars and take account of the gigantic mausolea of two emperors: that Mausoleum of Augustus, within which, in our day, a whole circus disports itself; and that Tomb of Hadrian, which lodges an entire fortress.

The gigantic, the immoderate, the excessive, besets you at each step in this funereal vision. What hyperbole, for instance, in these Arts, “prisoners of Death” and expiring because Julius II. disappears from the world! and how surprising that the austere Buonarroti should invent a flattery so incredible! It must be remembered also that the new Basilica of S. Peter, the vault of the Sistine, and

<sup>1</sup> *Life and Works of Michelangelo*, 2d ed., London, 1881, p. 79.

the Vatican Stanze—the three greatest titles to fame of the Mæcenâs-Pope—as yet are not. It is also entirely in advance of the Bolognese and the Mirandolan expeditions that Michelangelo celebrates the victories and conquests of the Rovere. “The Pope,” observes Mr. Wilson, a little mischievously, “has then no secrets for the artist; he confides to him his great projects for the future; he is even so sure of success that he allows himself to be proclaimed ten times conqueror in a design made before there had been even a declaration of war.” Perhaps, however, after all, and without any special confidence from the Pope, the artist grasped the entire meaning of a recent bull (January 10, 1504) which had declared the inalienable rights of the Church against the usurpers of her domains. But these domains, plucked from usurpation and recovered in the name of the law,—why represent them as conquered enemies, trodden under foot and biting the dust? Why, in general, and in presence of death, extol solely strength, dominion, glory,—grant nothing to humility, devotion, charity? This absence of all religious sentiment, of all Christian thought—nay, even, of all emblems of the Catholic faith, upon a tomb destined for a pontiff, is assuredly one of the most curious phenomena of the Renaissance. Of the two solitary Biblical figures in this vast composition, the Moses whom we know has certainly nothing evangelical in his aspect; and his pendant, the S. Paul Leaning on a Sword, in all probability scarcely differed from him in expression. Vainly one seeks those statues or medallions of the Virgin and Child, those reliefs of the











Annunciation or the Assumption, which the Quattrocentisti never failed to place in such positions. In Condivi's description, as in the Uffizi drawing, there is not so much as a crucifix to be found! <sup>1</sup>

In two or three weeks the project of the monument had been elaborated by the sculptor and approved by the Pope; in the month of April, 1505, we see Michelangelo in the midst of work in the Carrara quarries. He remains there eight long months, directs the excavations, makes contracts for transportation,—many of these contracts have been preserved to us,—and sends to Rome the blocks as fast as they are quarried and roughed out. In one of his most beautiful sonnets, Buonarroti speaks magnificently of “those living figures which, from the silent depths of the stone, slowly emerge into the light of day under the repeated blows of the mallet.” Deep within those belts of Ligurian marble, facing the azure sea, how many “living figures” were thus concealed, how many blows of the mallet were yet to be given! Once, even, he has the strange idea of cutting a mountain into human form, an immense cliff in its proud position between Carrara and the sea, and making it a beacon for sailors off the Riviera di Levante! These are visions kindred to the Rhodian Colossus and to cyclopean labours.

Colossal and cyclopean, but in a very different style,

<sup>1</sup> It is only in later designs for the monument, and after its size had been reduced, that the thought appears of placing the Virgin in medallion or statue. (See the drawing in the Beckerath collection; see also the monument in San Pietro in Vincoli.)

was the work which, meanwhile, had been decided upon in Rome. In frequent conversations during the month of March, 1505, on the subject of the monument, the question of its site had been many times discussed, and it had been finally settled, to the satisfaction both of the Pope and the sculptor. The tomb of Julius II. could be nowhere else than in that Basilica of the Vatican, where already reposed, around S. Peter's tomb, the most renowned pontiffs of Christendom. The naves of this church are not broad enough, it is true, nor are they high enough, to receive the enormous pyramid which is in preparation, but Nicholas V., more than half a century earlier, had begun work for the enlargement of the choir; this work, long since interrupted, shall now be resumed and promptly completed in a manner to furnish the required space.

After Michelangelo's departure for Carrara, the Pope continues to discuss this matter with his architects, notably with Giuliano di Sangallo and Bramante; but now objections are brought up, difficulties appear on every side; to complete the apse of Nicholas V. seems to be but a second-rate expedient, and of doubtful success; and thus, after a long-continued interchange of ideas, Julius II. arrives at a daring and never-to-be-forgotten decision. He decides to pull down the old Basilica completely; and to construct a new one, *e più bella e più magnifica*, as the excellent Condivi placidly remarks. Master Donato da Urbino, surnamed *il Bramante*, promises to construct a marvel, a prodigy, a very miracle in stone—nothing less than to lift in air Agrippa's Pantheon and

to place it' upon that Basilica of Constantine whose ruins are the admiration and the dismay of every visitor to the Roman Forum.

To destroy the church built by Constantine and Pope Sylvester; to demolish a building around which clung the most august and ancient traditions of Christendom; to disturb the repose of Leo the Great, of Gregory the Great, of Nicholas I. and so many other heroes of the Faith; to touch the very tomb of Saint Peter! Infatuated as Humanism was with its own merits, its *virtù*,—disrespectful as it was towards past ages, so long as they were not classic and pagan,—this plan did not fail to be a great shock to men's minds. The whole Sacred College protested, Mignanti tells us, who derived his information from authentic sources:

“The Cardinals were of opinion that it would be very difficult to obtain the money necessary for a construction of such importance, since the powerful Constantine himself, with all the resources of the Empire at his command, had not without difficulty erected the present Basilica, a very simple building in comparison with the one now projected. Moreover, the reconstruction would destroy a multitude of precious and honourable memories, thus wounding the piety of the devout, and diminishing their zeal in visiting the sanctuary.”

Among the public at large, the excitement at the first moment was even much more intense; and to appease

<sup>1</sup> *Hadrian's* Pantheon, by the indisputable testimony of brick-stamps found in every part of the great dome, in 1892-93, by M. George Chedanne, of the French Academy in Rome.—Tr.

it the Pope was compelled to announce that the project was postponed for further consideration. As early as the month of November, 1505, however, he solemnly makes known his fixed resolution to the municipal authorities of Milan, and asks them to assist in the great work by large gifts of money.

I am well aware that in our day — but in our day only — the idea has been adopted that the demolition of the old Basilica was purely a technical question. But does not the great Leo Alberti, writing about the middle of the fifteenth century, aver, in his treatise *De re ædificatoria*, that the Vatican Church at that time leaned towards the left in a manner to cause great anxiety; and is this not repeated, sixty years later, by Sigismond de' Conti? Had not Nicholas V. proposed, according to his biographer Manetti, the complete rebuilding of S. Peter's? Evidently, the edifice had long threatened to fall, and in ordering its destruction the Rovere yielded only to a necessity growing more and more imperious. Why, however, does no contemporary insist upon any such necessity? Why was not, in 1505, an argument so decisive brought to bear upon the recalcitrant cardinals? All the persons who at first speak to us of Julius II.'s colossal undertaking, whether historians, diplomats, or artists, with one voice agree in describing it as the result of a spontaneous inspiration of the Pope, of a desire on his part (which seems to them perfectly legitimate) to do a grand, a magnificent thing — *più bello e più magnifico*.

Nicholas V. was so far from meditating this destruction of the most ancient temple of the Christian faith in Rome,

that during his whole reign he never ceased adorning it with new mosaics and paintings. His intention was solely and simply to enlarge its apse.<sup>1</sup> All that can fairly be deduced from the assertions of Alberti or of Conti is that the Vatican Church was in need of substantial repairs. No Christian edifice — Bramante's least of all — has been secure from such a necessity. Finally, even if we admit the irremediable dilapidation of S. Peter's in 1505, did not a becoming respect for memories so grand, so august, command at least that the sanctuary be rebuilt in its ancient and consecrated form,— that, especially, the mosaics, the altars, and the tombs should be preserved and replaced? And had not this been the invariable procedure in Rome during the mediæval period when it was a question of restoring ecclesiastical edifices?

I shall venture to present still one other consideration, which perhaps is not entirely without importance. The sentence of Julius II., having been pronounced, the old Basilica was not thereupon razed to the ground in a day and at a blow. It was demolished piecemeal, one portion after another, during an entire century, to correspond with the advance of the new edifice. During all this century also, and notwithstanding the accumulated ruins, it did not cease to be the theatre of the great pontifical functions, to the extreme displeasure of ambassadors and *illustrissimi*, vastly incommoded by draughts and dust

<sup>1</sup> Bunsen, *Beschreibung der Stadt Rom*, i., 2, remarks very justly that Manetti, the too often boastful biographer of Nicholas V., while attributing to that pontiff the most extraordinary projects in respect to the Leonine City, never speaks of S. Peter's as at all threatening ruin.

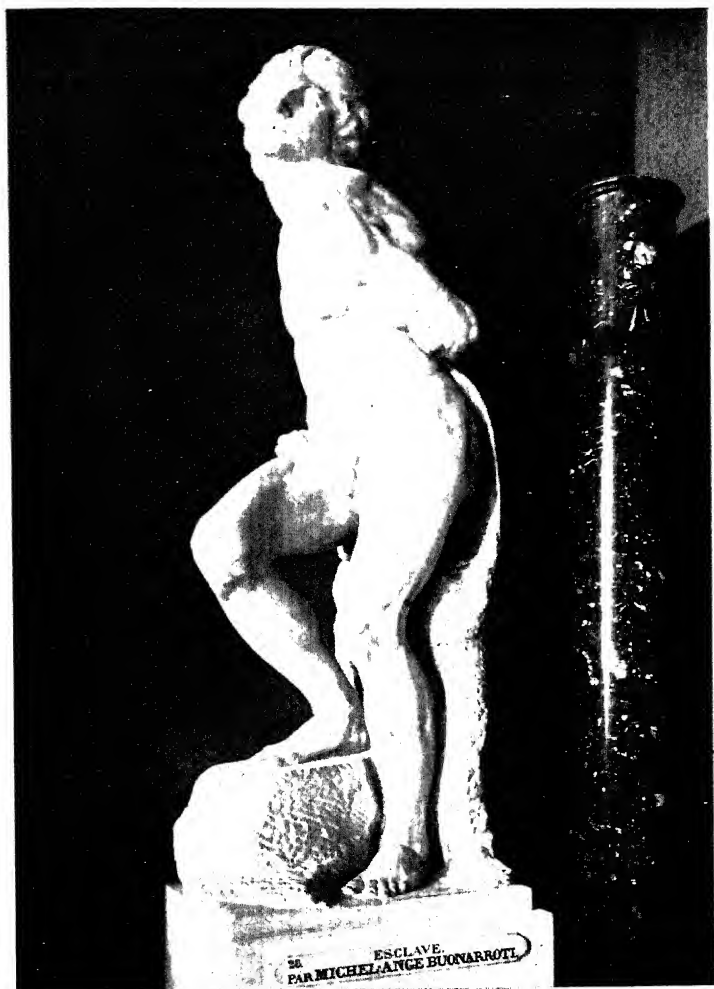


and the heat of the sun; to the despair, also, of masters of ceremonies, who, on these solemn occasions, knew not which way to turn. Paris de Grassis, the master of ceremonies under Julius II. and Leo X., the Dangeau of these two pontificates, is never done complaining, in his *Journal*, of the difficulties he had at each *funzione* in getting in place his scaffoldings, boards, and tapestries, in the midst of the *maladetta fabbrica*. The coronation of Sixtus V., in 1585, takes place, after the usual custom, on the great terrace of the old Basilica; the atrium, the façade of the church, and the long nave are still standing; the last of it is not demolished until 1609, under Paul V. Borghese. Now, during the whole course of this long and slow destruction, we hear of no accidental falling in, of no fragment of wall giving way of itself; up to the very last the noble old edifice yields only to blows of pickaxe and mattock: *frangitur non flectitur*. We read in Bunsen that the beams of the roof were esteemed strong enough to be used as timbers in an entirely new building of the time, the Farnese palace!

On his return from Carrara (January, 1506) Buonarroti saw the demolition already begun. He makes no objections to it, let us say at once; he will even all his life be proud of having been the occasion (*Venne ad esser cagione*, is Condivi's expression) of the renewal of the Basilica. He is, moreover, full of ardour and confidence on the subject of the mausoleum; he writes to Florence to have all his drawings sent to him; he has the blocks of marble transported from the bank of the Tiber to the great Piazza di San Pietro, "behind S. Catherine's church," where the









Pope has assigned him a studio. Julius II. pays him frequent visits in this studio, and even has "a draw-bridge" constructed, upon which he can cross directly from the Vatican to the artist's abode. The Pope, however, no longer has for the famous tomb the enthusiasm of the preceding year; he speaks of it less and less; he has quite new projects in mind, and proposes to the sculptor, already so famous by reason of the *Pietà* and the *David*, to adorn with frescos the vault of the Sistine. He insists; Michelangelo refuses, and with good reason,— "not being a painter," as he will have occasion to declare more than once.

Why is the Pope on this new tack, why does he thus suddenly abandon his long-cherished design?—The caprice of a despot, whose whims change at the wind's will, some of his biographers have thought; an old man's superstition, Condivi asserts, and Bramante's infamous intrigues, which succeeded in making Julius II. afraid of having a tomb built for himself while he was yet alive. This I scarcely believe. Whatever judgment we may form of the Rovere, it is impossible to deny him a certain real grandeur of soul: in matters of art, as in matters of statecraft, the universal interests of the Church, as he understood them, always took precedence with him over considerations of expediency or of personal aggrandisement. Once fired with the idea of building for the Catholic world a temple such as had never before been seen, is it wonderful that he lost his ardour about a strictly personal monument, destined for his own glory; that he felt even a certain remorse, possibly even shame

at it? Michelangelo did not fail to perceive the change, but without penetrating its cause; and he reproaches Bramante especially for having cut the ground from under his feet with the master. Also he reproaches him, and far more justly, with proceeding blindly in the demolition of S. Peter's, and destroying more than one precious column which might have been used for the new building.

In truth, Bramante's rage in destroying was worthy of Julius II.'s own fiery enthusiasm — worthy, also, of the pride of Humanism and its total failure to comprehend the great past of Christendom. A thing scarcely credible is that not until the reign of Sixtus V. did the idea occur to any man's mind to collect with some care the débris of the former sanctuary,—the altars, tombs, mosaics, statues, and reliefs,—and make something like an accurate register of them. For the eighty years preceding, no care had been taken of these glorious fragments; they had been left to be scattered to the winds or buried under the ruins, to be broken up and wasted; and Master Donato himself it was who set the deadly example of vandalism, at a date no earlier than the sixteenth century. The Romans, having no idea of the future S. Peter's, and seeing only the frightful ruins of the present one,—seeing, moreover, whole regions of the city torn up in laying out the new Via Giulia and the Lungara, and the Vatican itself all in disorder with the construction of the Belvedere, the Cortile of San Damaso, and galleries without end,—the Romans conceived a horror of this great demolisher, the Haussmann of the Renaissance. Late in

the reign of Julius II., June 12, 1512, Paris de Grassis writes in his private *Journal*: "*Architectum Bramantem, seu potius Ruinantem, ut communiter vocabitur. . . .*"

A curious pamphlet of the day<sup>1</sup> represents the famous architect, after his death, knocking at the gate of Paradise, which S. Peter refuses to open: "Why did you destroy my temple in Rome which, by its very antiquity, called even the least devout to God? You are the rascal to whom we owe this evil deed." After many subterfuges and evasions, the architect confesses that he likes to demolish,—that he should like to destroy the world; that he tried, indeed, to ruin the Pope. "But you failed in that," says S. Peter. "Yes, for Julius did not put his hand into his own pocket to build the new church, but relied on indulgences and the confessional." The conclusion of this jocose pamphlet is vastly amusing: Bramante finally proposes to make his own conditions for effecting an entrance into Paradise. Impenitent and impertinent, he will reconstruct Heaven itself:

"I shall begin by getting rid of this road which is so steep and difficult, that leads up here from the earth; I shall make one broad and easy, so that feeble old souls can come up on horseback. Also I shall pull down this Paradise of yours and build another with much finer and more cheerful residences for your *beati*." "And where do you propose to lodge my people while you are constructing all

<sup>1</sup> *Simia*, by Andrea Guarna da Salerno, Milan, 1517. I quote from extracts given by Bossi (*Il Cenacolo di Leonardo da Vinci*, 1810, 4°, pp. 246-249). It has been impossible for me to find the Latin original in Rome.



this?" "Oh, your people are accustomed to inconveniences; they have had a great many in their time. Some flayed alive, some stoned to death, they obtained their citizenship here by all sorts of discomforts. Besides, in this salubrious air, they will not take cold. . . . You are not pleased with my plans? Very good, I shall go to the other place then!"

Notice the allusion to the indulgences which are to pay for building the new church! And this arrow is aimed at Julius II. from Milan, a Cisalpine city, long before the theses of Martin Luther appeared! A hundred and fifty years later, let us hear what a Jesuit will say, a cardinal, the eminent historian of the Council of Trent, Sforza Pallavicini: "This material edifice of S. Peter's has destroyed a great part of his spiritual building. To procure the prodigious millions required by a construction so enormous, recourse was had to means which gave the first occasion to the Lutheran heresy, and inflicted upon the Church, in the end, the loss of many millions of souls."

At the price of what a schism in the great Christian family was to arise the temple whose corner-stone Julius II. laid, the Saturday *in albis*, 1506!

He came in solemn procession, attended by thirty-five cardinals. After a mass of the Santo Spirito by Cardinal Francesco Soderini, the Rovere approached a deep, broad trench, "like a chasm in the earth," which had been dug where now, beneath the dome, stands the statue of S. Veronica. The old man, with worn-out body and soul of iron, went down by a ladder into this chasm: "And as there was much anxiety felt lest the ground should give









way," says Paris de Grassis, "the Pope called out to those above not to come too near the edge." The usual medals and inscriptions were deposited; the foundations were consecrated; and Julius II. returned up the ladder.

This took place on the 18th of April, 1506; the preceding day, the 17th, Michelangelo had made his escape from Rome! Irritated, desperate, seized with inexplicable terrors, he went away suddenly and secretly, leaving his studio, his blocks of marble, and the fatal monument, which was destined to throw its shadow over his sad career for many years to come. This tomb, he said later, had been the tragedy of his life. It was, perhaps, also, the tragedy of the Renaissance and of Roman Catholicism.

## CHAPTER III

### THE OLD BASILICA

CROSSING this morning, under a burning sun, the Piazza di San Pietro, I was more than ever displeased with the Emperor Henry IV. for destroying, during the siege of 1083, the imposing portico which, up to the time of Gregory VII., had united the Vatican Basilica with the western extremity of the bridge of S. Angelo. This gallery was not of conspicuous regularity, making an angle near the church of Santa Maria Transpontina; I imagine that it may have resembled that succession of arcades in Bologna which ascends from the Porta Saragozza to the heights of the Madonna di San Luca: but it must have been very much appreciated by those who

*Dall' un lato tutti hanno la fronte  
Verso il Castello, e vanno a San-Pietro,  
Dall' altra sponda vanno verso 'l monte.*

Why had not the successors of Pope Alexander VII. thought of reconstructing a work which, besides its manifest utility, would have further enhanced the splendour of this square, already unequalled in the world? Imagine, instead of the shabby block of houses between the two streets, the Borgo Vecchio and the Borgo Nuovo, a double portico extending from the Piazza Pia to Bernini's colonnade: what superb Propylæa for a Christian Parthenon,

and how Michelangelo's dome, now crushed for lack of suitable points of view, would then become visible from afar, in all its majestic grandeur! It was no fault of the Comte de Tournon, the vigilant and intelligent Prefect of Rome during the captivity of Pius VII., that this immense plan failed of execution at the beginning of the present century: the decree of Napoleon sanctioning the project is dated August 8, 1811; the fatal Russian campaign reversed this decision.

I have allowed myself to-day the melancholy pleasure of reconstructing in thought, and here upon the very spot, the old Basilica of S. Peter's as it was known to the generation of Julius II. before the fatal sentence of 1505. The second volume of Bunsen<sup>1</sup> has been to me one of the most valuable of guides in this "Archæological Promenade," and especially has made very visible to my mind the extraordinary fortune of this little space of earth, of origins so humble, of destinies so marvellous! The Capitol and the Palatine, the Quirinal, the Aventine, the Cœlian, the Esquiline, and the Viminal had already shone with a glory ten times secular, while the Mons Vaticanus was still *fuori le mure* and outside of history; Livy scarcely mentions it. Two names especially, one, the purest, the other, the most ignoble, in Roman story, had left their trace in the region beyond the Tiber: here Cincinnatus cultivated his modest field (*prata Quinctia*); here Nero lighted up his living torches of Christian

<sup>1</sup> Which, however, must be corrected at many points in accordance with the more recent works of De Rossi, Müntz, Stevenson, Kirsch, and others, and especially with the valuable *Codex Grimaldi* (of the Barberini Library), of the year 1619.



martyrs. The region was malarial, in spite of the extensive gardens which covered its surface; even the wine it produced was regarded with suspicion. *Vaticana bibis, bibis venenum*, says Martial. The German and Gallic soldiers of Vitellius paid with their lives, according to Tacitus, for the imprudence of camping *infamibus Vaticanis locis*. In this ill-famed region, however, on the edge of Nero's horrible Circus, Pope Sylvester erected his Christian temple, after Constantine's great victory over Maxentius. And soon, among all the hills of Rome, the world remembered no other but this desert slope which held the tomb of a poor Galilean fisherman!

Innumerable buildings have sprung up since, in the long course of centuries, to people and even to encumber the region once so solitary; descriptions which we have of the Vatican Piazza, at the close of the Middle Ages, give the idea of an excessive crowd. To the right, on the north, the pontifical palace reared its crenelated walls, and multiplied its towers, its courts, and its *loggie*. At the left, annexes and dependencies innumerable clinging to the side of S. Peter's crowded upon the noble monument with their diffuse and incongruous masses. As far as the eye could penetrate, there were sacristies, presbyteries, oratories, chapels, churches circular or rectangular, —there were convents, hospitals, mausolea, and cemeteries; these buildings obstructed the avenues, spreading out especially towards the south, on the side of the Neronian Circus, and surrounded its *guglia*.<sup>1</sup> In the midst,

<sup>1</sup> *Guglia* (*acuglia*, needle) was the name given by the populace to the obelisk which crowned the *spina* of Nero's (or rather Calig-

however, of all this parasitic growth of buildings, Pope Sylvester's Basilica retained its primitive form, keeping intact its great architectural lines. The decoration and the fitting-up may have been often changed and renewed, but the constituent parts of the edifice remained the same up to the time of Julius II.; indeed, we may say, until the close of the sixteenth century.

A stately flight of steps (thirty-five in number, divided into five sections), all of marble and porphyry, led from the ground to the immense plateau on which the Basilica stood. At the top of this flight of steps there was an extensive terrace, over fifty feet deep; here took place the Benedictions *urbi et orbi*, the papal coronations, the solemn receptions of kings and emperors, and many other great public displays; here Charlemagne was received by Adrian I., on Palm Sunday, 774, after having ascended the steps on his knees, kissing each step on the way. The Loggia of the Benedictions, with its three stories of arcades,—which the old views of S. Peter's represent on the right, on a corner of this platform very near the pontifical palace,—dates only from later times; it was the work of Pius II., and of his successors in the last half of the fifteenth century. On the opposite side, at the left,—that is to say, on the south,—the extensive palace of the arch-priest, also a work of the fifteenth century, seems to have occupied the site of an ancient hospital for pilgrims.

ula's) Circus of the Vatican. It is well known that this obelisk was transported by Sixtus V. to its present position. An inscription on a stone in the pavement near the present sacristy is in these words: *Sito dall' obelisco fino all' anno MDLXXXVI.*

In front of the Basilica, properly so called, there was an oblong, open court, the *atrium*,<sup>1</sup> extending from the terrace as far as the threshold of the present church, beyond Maderna's vestibule. The court had suffered much from the ravages of time and the violence of man: at the beginning of the sixteenth century, it appeared shorn of the splendour that it formerly had when its interior was filled with a profusion of symbolic trees,—palms, cypresses, olive and rose-trees,—and ornamented on all sides with a handsome Corinthian portico. However, the western row of columns of the *quadriporticus* was yet entire; opposite, at the right of the church door, a bell-tower of the Carolingian date lifted its graceful outline against the sky, and the famous *cantharus* of the centre never failed to excite admiration. It was a magnificent fountain surrounded by eight porphyry columns and protected by a gilded roof, with a great display of dolphins, peacocks, and dragons thereon. A colossal pine-cone in bronze, reputed to have been brought from Hadrian's mausoleum, formed the core for the fountain: Petrus Mallius, a canon of the twelfth century, speaks pertinently of a leaden pipe introduced into this cone, and of apertures made in its scales. Dante, to give a measure of the formidable Nimrod, the founder of Babylon, whom he encounters in the lowest

<sup>1</sup> The ancient Christian basilica consisted of an *atrium*, a *narthex*, and the church properly so called. The *atrium* was a great unroofed court, with a fountain for lustration (*cantharus*) in the middle; in this court, the "penitents" remained. The *narthex*, a vestibule, covered, and of much smaller dimensions, was part of the church building, and was appropriated to the catechumens. The Basilica of San Clemente at Rome gives a perfectly clear idea of these arrangements.

circle of the Inferno, says that the giant's head appeared to him "long and large as the pine-cone of S. Peter's in Rome, and the rest of him to correspond." This enormous mass of bronze remains to our time, an embarrassment to archæologists; the *pigna* shows no trace of the holes mentioned by Petrus Mallius! Let us not dwell upon this vexed topic. Dante terminates his episode as to Nimrod, with the imperative words:

*Lasciamolo stare e non parliamo a voto.*

Passing through the atrium, one entered the vestibule (*narthex*); opposite were the five doors which gave access to the Basilica itself. The old church occupied the space which, in the present building, lies between the huge porphyry roundel in the floor (the *rota porphyretica*) and the high altar, and in breadth it extended from the northern edge to the southern edge of Bramante's piers, the extremities of its apse and transepts only slightly exceeding this parallelogram. The level of the floor was much lower than that of the modern church, being, in fact, that of the *sagre grotte* and the floor of the *confessio*, and the height in the transept was a hundred and twenty-five feet. A hundred columns, partly granite and partly marble, in four rows, made the five naves which corresponded to the five doors. The central nave, almost three times as broad as the others, also surpassed them in height, owing to the two lateral walls which surmounted the architrave of its colonnade and supported the timbered roof. A row of windows in these walls, eleven on each side, lighted the interior. In its general plan and organic distribution,—nave and

aisles, triumphal arch and transept, semicircular apse, crypt, and high altar,—the edifice of Pope Sylvester has become the prototype of all Christian basilicas; San Paolo *fuori* notably differed from it—I speak of the building as it was before the fire of 1823—only in the entablature of its columns: instead of an architrave they were connected with one another by a succession of arches, lighter and more graceful in effect.

The tomb of the Prince of the Apostles still stands in the same place that it has ever occupied on the *Mons Vaticanus*; this is the one spot that Bramante and his successors were obliged to respect. “This sepulchre, placed under the altar,” writes Gregory of Tours, near the close of the sixth century, “is extremely precious. He who desires to pray there opens the *cancellum* which surrounds it, and approaches the tomb; then setting open the little *fenestrella*, he puts in his head and asks the favour of which he has need. The effect is unfailing, if only the appropriate form of prayer has been employed.” The Middle Ages were unwearied in endowing this tomb and the high altar with all imaginable splendour of gold and gems; the numerous spoliations which the *confessio* suffered from Saracen and even from Christian hordes could not discourage the generous piety of the faithful. Narratives of the period are never done dilating upon the immense treasures gathered in this place,—tabernacles, ciboria, crosses, vases, candelabra, cherubs, and statues;—they extol especially the magnificence of the enclosure of the sanctuary,—the *cancelli*, mentioned by Gregory of Tours, which were made more and more splendid by

successive pontiffs. We read of a porphyry balustrade surmounted by alabaster columns; above, an architrave of silver, with chalices, fleurs-de-lis, and translucent vases; in the centre, an arcade surmounted by a golden Christ, attended by tall silver angels. The alabaster columns were twisted, and were surrounded with carved vine sprays and leaves (*vitineæ*), and tradition asserted that they came from the temple of Solomon (Herod?); a point more certain is that they gave the idea of Bernini's frightful baldacchino. Without making any further attempt to reconstruct, from the various and confused data that come down to us, this famous chancel of S. Peter's, I find it better to indicate to the curious the sole pictorial document which it is possible, I believe, to consult on the subject,—namely, the fresco of the Vatican, in the Hall of Constantine, which has for its subject the *Donation of Constantine*. The scene takes place in the old Basilica; in the background, in front of the tribune and the high altar, there are visible the twisted columns, standing upon a stylobate and supporting an architrave from which are suspended lamps. Is the reproduction exact at every point? This I should not dare affirm; but it is the work of Giulio Romano and his companions; it dates from a time when the chancel was yet standing; and at least it should deter our antiquaries from too fantastic attempts at restorations. It is also noteworthy that Raffaello evidently had in mind the *vitineæ* of the balustrade in that one of his *arazzi* in which is represented the temple of Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Vatican. Gallery of Tapestries: *S. Peter Healing the Lame Man*.

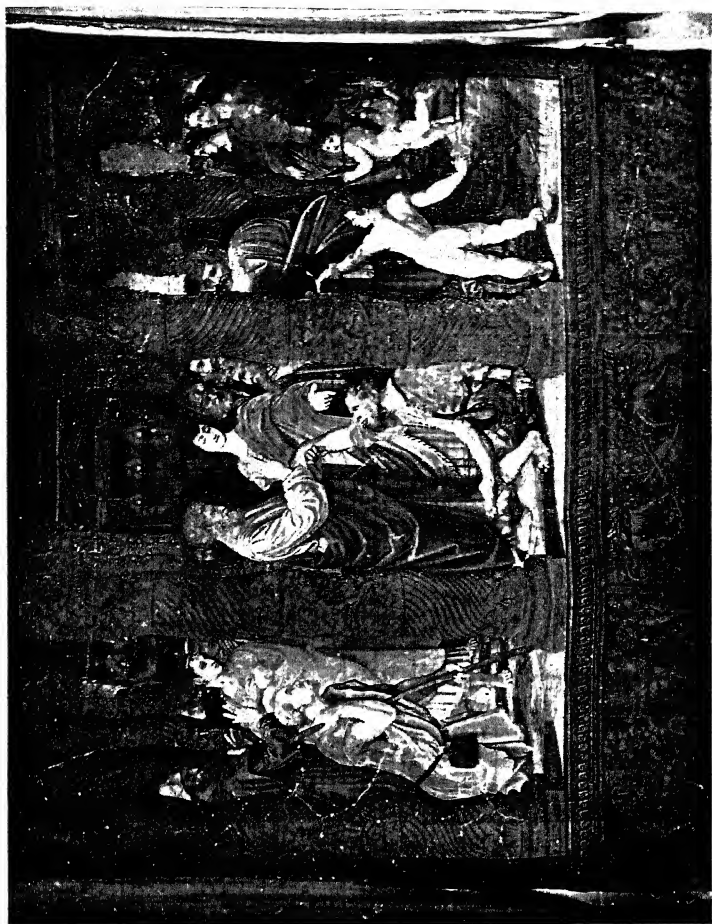
Like all the other episcopal thrones of the old churches, the *cathedra Petri* of the Vatican—Galla Placidia speaks of it in a letter to Theodosius—was originally placed in the tribune, behind the *confessio* and the high altar. For reasons which I cannot explain, it was transferred from one oratory to another of the old Basilica, and only resumed its traditional place in the new S. Peter's, where Bernini made for it the monstrous covering which we all know, and which has been but once removed from it, namely, in June, 1867, on the centenary of the Apostle. I was at that time in Rome, and had the opportunity of seeing close at hand the famous chair, hidden from view for two centuries. It is a great *sella gestatoria* of yellowed and worm-eaten oak; the front part of the framework is of black acacia-wood; on the edge of the back as well as on the framework of the front are little ivory fillets and squares, engraved or carved, representing contests of animals, struggles of centaurs, the signs of the Zodiac, and the twelve labours of Hercules. The choice of subjects appears singular for the chair of S. Peter; but these decorations were evidently inserted later, taken from some *cistus*, or ancient piece of furniture; many of the plaques were even set in upside down, and Hercules executes certain of his labours standing on his head, with his feet in the air! Nevertheless it is the most ancient and the most august throne in the world; I feel there is something lacking in Macaulay's famous exordium about the New Zealander of the future!

Lateral altars were added at a very early date to the central high altar of the *confessio*; in the time of Julius











II. there had come to be twenty; of these the most famous were the oratories consecrated to the four "great relics" that are now within the four piers of the dome. It is singular to note that two of these "great relics" were deposited in S. Peter's only near the close of the fifteenth century, and by hands most profane: a schismatic Palæologos, a fugitive tyrant of the Morea, brought to Rome in 1461 the skull of S. Andrew; and the Sacred Spear was a gift from the Sultan Bajazet, the son of him who conquered Constantinople! On the other hand, the oratory of the Holy Cross, and the altar of the Santo Volto, date respectively from the sixth and the seventh century. Having reached the highest circle of the Paradiso, in the presence of the white rose of the sacred army, beholding Beatrice and S. Bernard, Dante exclaims: "I was like him who, coming from the confines of Croatia, to look upon *our Veronica* cannot satisfy his eyes with the sight of a glory so ancient, and says to himself incessantly: 'Such were Thy features, then, O Christ, my Lord and true God!'" From the *Veronica nostra*, popular devotion has since transferred itself to the bronze statue of the Apostle, well known in our day, but in the Middle Ages very far from enjoying "so ancient a glory"; in the beginning of the sixteenth century it was not yet in the Vatican Church.<sup>1</sup>

The great tomb of the *confessio* had its accompanying

<sup>1</sup> It was to be seen in the church of S. Martin, west of the Vatican. The *Pietà* of Michelangelo, which dates from 1499, was originally deposited in the church of Santa Petronilla; it has occupied its present place only since 1749.

train, its immense funereal cortège. Of the two hundred and fifty pontiffs who, up to the time of Julius II., had followed one another on S. Peter's throne, ninety-two reposed upon the plateau of the Vatican, which, since the fifth century, had become the usual Campo Santo of the Popes. From the outside edge of the atrium the tombs had, in time, extended into the vestibule, had penetrated the church itself, filling the aisles and the great nave; and they formed a monumental history of the most complete and impressive kind.<sup>1</sup> At first, with simple tumular stones, rude, flat flags; then, stone chests imitating the form of a sarcophagus; finally, real sarcophagi, some borrowed from earlier Christian tombs, others from the pagan epoch, and adapted as best could be; on all work of the period very little ornamentation; the inscriptions, the most attractive feature, in a rough, barbaric Latin, singularly vigorous and expressive.

By degrees the marble grows animated, takes shape: a figure is seen, lying at full length on the lid of the sarcophagus, invested with stole and chasuble, the head crowned with the tiara and resting gently upon a pillow, the hands always gloved, crossed upon the breast, the right over the left, and outside the glove, on the middle finger of the hand, a large ring with projecting stone, the Fisherman's Ring. The art of the Cosmati employs

<sup>1</sup>Observe the tombs of Gregory V., Adrian IV., and Boniface VIII., in the *grotte Vaticane*; of Honorius IV., in the Savelli chapel, at Ara Cœli; of Nicholas V. in the *sagre grotte*; those of Sixtus IV. and Innocent VIII. in S. Peter's; those of Pius II. and Paul II. at San Andrea della Valle. All these monuments were originally in old S. Peter's.

itself for many generations on this simple and beautiful theme; often it rears an elegant canopy above the sarcophagus and adorns its mouldings and colonnettes with strips of mosaic in gilt glass and tiny coloured stones. Then, suddenly, an interruption, a long gap,— the exile of Avignon and the Great Schism; and when the chain of sepulchres is again united, after a break of more than a century, the face of the world is changed as if by enchantment, and the Renaissance arrives, to proclaim the joy of living, and a worship of antiquity even in this sombre papal necropolis! How many exquisite works, at first; but, also, how many signs of danger! A Theology, as the goddess Diana with her arrows and quiver, on the tomb of Sixtus IV., already inaugurates one of the most fatal aberrations of the age of Leo X.; a cenotaph of Pius II., monstrous in proportions and in arrogance, already prepares the way for the gigantic project of Buonarroti which shall pull down the Basilica itself.

Why do certain distinguished authors make it so much a point, then, to depreciate the church of Pope Sylvester, to esteem it a building necessarily without merit, without character, quite suited to an epoch of profound decadence?

Profound, however, as was the decadence of the other arts at the Constantinian epoch, architecture could still do grand and powerful things; the Baths of Diocletian, and the Basilica of Constantine (of Maxentius, in truth) were models even in their ruins for the genius of a Michelangelo and a Bramante.<sup>1</sup> A very ancient legend,

<sup>1</sup> I call attention to the curious passage in Raffaello's "Report" to Leo X. upon the monuments of Rome: "And although liter-

reproduced in the *Stanze*<sup>1</sup> by the pupils of Raffaello, relates that the Emperor Constantine, with his own hands laboured on the foundations of S. Peter's, loading and carrying out twelve basketfuls of earth, in memory of the Twelve Apostles. It cannot be supposed that he neglected, at any rate, to have the best architects of the time employed upon the building. Nor were they, indeed, mediocre minds,—these men who were the first to adapt the forms of the profane basilica—at once market, exchange, and tribunal—to the entirely new demands of a cult in the highest degree spiritual. The conception was so masterly, so successful, that it has, in principle and up to our own time, prevailed in all religious edifices. Doubtless the execution, in detail, in ornamentation, in matters really in the province of sculpture, was very defective, and suffered from the general decay of all plastic feeling. The hundred columns of the interior of the old Basilica were probably, all or part of them, brought from other buildings, the capitals were of different styles, and of very unequal size and value; but this forest of a hundred monoliths could not have failed to be most impressive and imposing. Think of the effect which is produced by this feature of San Paolo *fuori*, notwithstanding the whole as-

ature, sculpture, and almost all the other arts continued to decline and grow worse until the period of the last Emperors, nevertheless architecture remained and was preserved *con buona ragione*; and men continued to build as they had built before; of all the arts this was the last to perish." And he quotes, as an example, the Baths of Diocletian and the Arch of Constantine (from the point of view of construction, of course).

<sup>1</sup> Vatican, Hall of Constantine, at the right, under the fresco of the Baptism.

pect of that church is so deplorably modern; notwithstanding the loud tone of its ornamentation, the glitter and reflection of its ceiling, its pavement, and its marbles! The timbered roof, the *opus Alexandrinum* of the pavement, the materials themselves already worn with age, must very early have softened the interior of the Vatican Church, must have given it an atmosphere—I might almost say a harmonious *patina*—that the profusion of paintings and of hangings (*vela*) would render still more intense. The colossal figure of the Christ Enthroned, giving His benediction, the symbolic Lamb and the Rivers of Paradise, with stories from the Old and New Testaments and scenes from the lives of the Apostles, covered the hemicycle of the apse, the broad surfaces of the triumphal arch, and the high walls of the great nave; the decoration extended to the narthex and the atrium, Giotto's *Navicella* shining in the interior of this court, on the eastern side, above the main entrance. I like to fancy the aspect of this church,—with its orientation to the west, like most of the churches of the early time,—I like to figure it to myself during the *Missa solemnis*, especially at the moment of the elevation of the Host, all the doors being then wide open, and the sunlight falling full upon the refulgent chancel and high altar, and upon the sombre mosaics of the tribune and the triumphal arch: it is as if upon the naves of San Paolo *fuori* there fell that peculiar golden, blurred light of the interior of San Marco in Venice.

This was the moment also when the crowd of penitents, outside in the atrium under Giotto's *Navicella*, began



to move slowly forward towards the *confessio*. They walked along a road of monuments, a Christian Via Appia bordered with tombs, and on these tombs they read the names of Leo I., of Gregory I., of Adrian I., and a hundred other pontiffs, down to Boniface VIII.,<sup>1</sup> Nicholas V., and Julius II.'s immediate predecessor. The ancient Emperors Honorius and Valentinian III., Junius Bassus of the great family of the Anicii, Prefect of Rome, the German Emperor Otho II., the Anglo-Saxon kings Cædwalla and Offa, also had their tombs here, for it was a time when the powerful of the earth aspired ardently to the honour of burial in the Campo Santo of the Vatican. How many things all these names must have said to the penitent, the pilgrim, "from the remote confines of Croatia"! They recalled barbaric invasions followed by miraculous barbaric conversions to Christianity,—the wars of the Crusades, the outrages of the Hohenstaufen and the Capetian; the restoration of empire by Leo III., the restoration of letters by Nicholas V.; the struggles, the trials, and the triumphs of the Church. That frieze of medallions along the architrave of the great nave was the unbroken line of the successors of S. Peter; this disk of red stone on which he knelt, was the *rota porphyretica* where emperors, on their coronation-day, had

<sup>1</sup> The tomb of Gregory VII. was lacking at S. Peter's; he lies buried at Salerno: "I have loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore I die in exile" (*Dilexi justitiam et odivi iniquitatem, propterea morior in exilio*). And, singular fact, the name of Gregory VII. is lacking also in the great poem of Dante, who makes mention neither of Hildebrand nor of the Emperor Henry IV.!

recited the Creed, and received the benediction of the cardinal-bishop. Many an oratory, sculpture, mosaic, and ex-voto, bore the inscription of the Othos, of Charlemagne, or of Constantine; every age, every hero of Christendom had left some trace within these walls; from every stone spoke the great voice of history, *mirum spargens sonum, per sepulchra regionum*.

Of these oratories, tombs, sculptures, and inscriptions, we possess to-day only miserable débris, scattered and mutilated fragments; and one learns with amazement what transformations have been undergone by this or that noble piece of the great wreck of Pope Sylvester's church. The beams of its roof, we are told, were used in the timber-work of the Farnese palace; the four monoliths of Egyptian granite which stood at the doors of the atrium went to adorn the façade of the Acqua Paola; the famous pine-cone of the *cantharus* and its two bronze peacocks are now in the *nicchione* of the Vatican Garden; and eight of the famous columns of the *confessio* are built into the rococo balconies, which, in S. Peter's, deface Bramante's four colossal piers. Stranger still were the destinies of the tomb of the Emperor Otho II. The ancient sarcophagus which held the mortal remains of the young monarch until 1609—the year when the last part of the old Basilica was torn down—was afterwards changed into a fountain to adorn the Cortile of the Quirinal Palace; and its superb lid, a colossal mass of red porphyry, now inverted, is the baptismal font of S. Peter's, in the first chapel on the left of the entrance. Let it be noted also that this same porphyry lid came from Hadrian's mauso-

leum, and had probably sheltered the ashes of that ultrapagan prince! As an example of the amazing metamorphoses which Rome alone can display, the good Ampère liked to mention this baptismal basin, to which were attached the names of the friend of Antinoüs, of a mystical Kaiser, and of an infinity of Transteverine babies! Among the best-known fragments from old S. Peter's to which the new gave shelter, it is superfluous to mention the *Navicella*, and the ciborium of Giotto (this latter, in the sacristy), Filarete's bronze doors (at whose side, high upon the wall of the façade, may be read Charlemagne's long and beautiful inscription in honour of Pope Adrian, perhaps the composition of Alcuin), and the bronze mausolea of Sixtus IV. and of Innocent VIII.; as for the most celebrated of the Quattrocento pontifical tombs, that of Nicholas V., its fragments—with so many other precious and horribly mutilated monuments—since 1609 lie scattered over the ground of these *sagre grotte Vaticane*, which form, as it were, a second basilica under the upper church, visited by torchlight, like another Herculaneum.

A strange Herculaneum, and the more touching, because the ruins here testify to the fury, not at all of the elements, but of men; and of men who in so many respects are our superiors, and are to this day our teachers! How could it have been possible that in an age so enlightened, at a time when every bit of antique marble was piously treasured, and when Raffaello addressed to Leo X. his famous "Report upon the Preservation and Restoration of the Monuments of Rome,"—how could it have been possible that, at that very moment, with deliberate

intent, there were broken up and destroyed so many monuments—splendid, venerable, or sacred—of the ancient Basilica of S. Peter? This question vexes me, whenever I visit the *sagre grotte*: to-day again it besets me, in presence of the magnificent tombs of Junius Bassus and of Boniface VIII.,—of the curious mosaic of the seventh-century altar of the Santo Volto,—of the inscription of S. Damasus, the restorer of the catacombs,—and of Matilda, “the great donor.” It was curious to read, among the very oldest of these inscriptions, one by Gregory III. (733) against “the destroyers of statues and images.”

Coming up from these crypts, and before leaving the Leonine City, I halted for a few minutes in the Vatican Library, in the *salone* which Domenico Fontana built in a year's time,—which, also, a hundred painters, under the direction of Cesare Nebbio da Orvieto and Guerrio da Modena, forthwith covered with frescos from top to bottom. The frescos are poor; but some of those above the doors and windows are still interesting to persons curious in such matters because they present views of Rome near the close of the sixteenth century. The painting of the coronation of Sixtus V. specially merits attention; it represents the Piazza di San Pietro in 1585. At the right is the Vatican Palace; then the great terrace at the top of the steps with the Loggia of the Benedictions; behind this (but inside the atrium) rises the campanile of Leo IV.; on the opposite side, at the south, extends the palace of the arch-priest, and very near this, a little in the rear and beyond the terrace is the *guglia*, still in its original site. The central space, between the palace of

the arch-priest and the Loggia, is occupied by the three doors which give access to the atrium; above these doors appears in perspective the façade of the Basilica, with an immense rose-window and a cross where the two cornices meet. An innumerable multitude on foot and on horse-back fills the piazza, looking on at the coronation which takes place on the terrace in front of the atrium, upon a stately platform surmounted by a baldacchino. So far all remains unchanged from the centuries preceding; the solemnity occurs in the accustomed place, and the aspect is scarcely altered since the days of Charlemagne and the Hohenstaufens. But yonder, far off, in the background of the picture, on the very edge of the scene, a round, gigantic tower rises, like a menacing shadow in the horizon. It is not completed; it shows only windows separated by coupled columns, and it is roofless: it is the drum of that dome whose wooden model Michelangelo had left at his death, and whose completion Sixtus V. ordered without further delay. The tower, though incomplete, dominates and crushes Basilica, terrace, and piazza, *la terra Christiana tutta aduggia*.<sup>1</sup> The construction inaugurated by Bramante had gone on, the century through, slowly, gradually, enveloping with its formidable piers Pope Sylvester's church; already the adjacent edifices and chapels have been swept away; in twenty-five years from the date of which we are speaking (1585), the final blow will be struck, and, last of all, the atrium will fall before Maderna's pickaxe. The new Basilica will destroy the old.

<sup>1</sup> Leo Alberti had already said of Brunelleschi's dome: *Ampla da coprire con sua ombra tutti i populi toscani*.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE STATUE AT BOLOGNA (1506-1507)

ON the 26th of August, 1506, four months after laying the first stone of the new Vatican Basilica, Julius II. quitted Rome at the head of an army, and began his career as a conqueror: "Leaving," as says, shortly after, the French contemporary chronicler, "S. Peter's chair to assume the title of Mars, the god of battles, to display his triple crown on the field, and to sleep under a tent; and God knows how fair to behold in the field were his mitres, his crosses, and his crucifixes!"

The success of this first campaign — or "crusade," as he himself called it, speaking to Macchiavelli — is astonishingly rapid. Giampolo Baglioni, the sanguinary tyrant of Perugia, who has never recoiled before any danger or any crime, now suddenly is affrighted, hastens to meet Julius II. at Orvieto, surrenders his fortified city, and begs only to be admitted among the followers of the Pope. At Bologna the same panic seizes the aged Giovanni Bentivoglio, surrounded by his valiant family and his numerous vassals and armed men. He escapes to the French camp of Maréchal Chaumont, and the city welcomes with frenzied delight the "Pope-Liberator." Julius II. enters Bologna, the ancient Felsina, "like another Julius Cæsar," in a huge chariot, a purple canopy above

his head. Still more classic is the homage paid him by the Romans, on his return some months later. The *arcus Domitiani* upon the Corso (at that time still standing) "is so splendidly decorated with statues and pictures," says Albertini, the quasi-official historiographer, "that one would think Domitian himself had returned, to triumph anew." Near the Castle of Sant' Angelo, the gilded oak-tree of the Rovere rises from the centre of a globe, lifting its branches to the height of Santa Maria Transpontina; and, from a quadriga with white horses, winged genii present palms to the victorious pontiff. The greatest humanist of the age, who at that time was travelling in Italy, witnessed these scenes: notwithstanding his ardent love for antiquity, Erasmus of Rotterdam cannot conceal his profound surprise (*non sine tacite genitu spectabam*) to see the Successor of the Apostles surrounded with so pagan a display.

While Julius II. was thus giving the world the extraordinary spectacle of a Pope conquering like Cæsar, triumphing like Domitian, Michelangelo, having escaped from Rome and taken refuge in Tuscany, was occupied with no less an idea than that of quitting Italy altogether and going to take service with the Grand Turk!

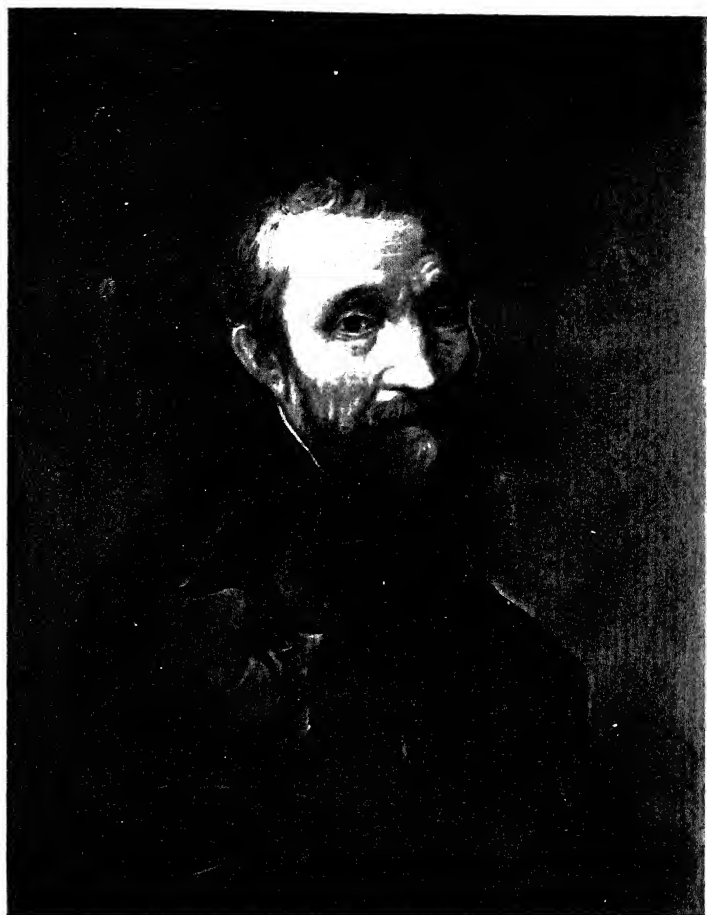
"Giuliano,"—Buonarroti wrote, May 2, 1506,<sup>1</sup> two weeks after his extraordinary flight from Rome, to the architect Giuliano da Sangallo, and enjoined him to show the words to the pontiff himself,—"I learn from your letter that the Pope has taken my departure very ill, and that his Holiness is disposed to act and to pay as was

<sup>1</sup> Letter of Michelangelo, ed. Milanesi, p. 377.











## The Statue at Bologna (1506-1507) 49

agreed, and that I may return without any fear. It is only too true that on Holy Saturday I heard the Pope say,—he was at table and was talking with his jewellers and his master of ceremonies—that he would never again spend a *baiocco* for stones, small or great. This did not a little surprise me; however, before going away, I asked for the money necessary to continue the work, and his Holiness replied that I should come again on Monday. On Monday I came, Tuesday, Wednesday also, and Thursday, as he well knew; finally, on Friday morning, I was sent away, driven away, and he who did it said that he knew me well, but that he had orders. Thus it happened that, having heard the words spoken on Saturday and having thus seen their effect, I was seized with despair.”

Was the artist justified in taking to himself words said about “stones, small or great”; also was he right in coming day after day in *Easter week* to claim his money? I should not dare affirm it; and the rest of the letter seems to me to leave no doubt as to the morbid excitement of Michelangelo at this period, an actual condition of hallucination. “This, however,” he continues, “is not the sole cause of my departure; there was still another thing, about which I am not willing to write. It is enough to say that I had reason to believe that if I remained in Rome, my tomb would be ready much before the Pope’s; and it was this which was the cause of my sudden departure.” What does this mean? Did he fear Bramante’s poignard, or was it some mysterious plot framed by the Vatican people? At a later day, however, he who wrote

this letter full of foolish fears was to return to Rome and pass more than half his life there, without the least disaster!

Nor, indeed, is this the only time when we see this great genius impelled by chimerical terrors to extreme and inexplicable resolutions. In 1494 he takes flight on the approach of Charles VIII. for the reason that a lute-player relates to him a mysterious dream. In 1529 he takes flight while directing the fortification of besieged Florence, abandoning his post in presence of the enemy on a warning from "some one who from the neighbourhood of the Porta San Niccolò, whether sent by God or by the devil I know not," he frankly communicates to his friend Battista della Palla!<sup>1</sup> The Roman episode in April, 1506, belongs evidently in this same category of the vagaries of Buonarroti's vexed and gloomy soul.

I feel obliged also to class with these vagaries the strange interpretation that he always put upon the Pope's proposition in regard to the Sistine Chapel. It was Bramante, he said (and he affirmed it again in his old age), who perfidiously insinuated this scheme into the mind of Julius II.; a snare was laid for him, in thus giving to the sculptor a painter's task; a foreseen and desired failure was thus prepared for him. He had, however, himself, and of his own free will, as early as 1504, before the Roman expedition, before any *perfidie* of Bramante, challenged the greatest painter of the time, — composing, in competition with Lionardo da Vinci, his famous cartoon of the *War of Pisa*. This cartoon had excited the

<sup>1</sup> *Lettere*, p. 457.

world's admiration; it was at that very moment the great school in which all young painters were training themselves; Vasari enumerates Ridolfo Ghirlandajo, Andrea del Sarto, Francia Bigio, Pontormo, and a certain pupil of Perugino, by name Raffaello Santi. Verily, no satanic intrigue was needed to suggest to the Rovere that the author of the *War of Pisa*, for the Hall of the Great Council in the Palazzo Vecchio, might be very well able to place some masterpiece of painting upon the splendid vault of the Sistina.

Julius II., as is well known, made repeated attempts to bring back the artist to his studio in Rome, first, by appeals to Michelangelo himself; then, through the Florentine Signory and the gonfalonier Soderini. The Cardinal of Pavia, Alidosi, an all-powerful favourite with the Rovere, and likewise a great admirer of Michelangelo, employs himself zealously in negotiations. Nothing comes of it: Buonarroti still remains indignant and frightened—*impaurito*, as Soderini says in a letter to the Pope, and one day the gonfalonier learns that the artist is negotiating with the Sultan, Bajazet II., through the mediation of the Franciscan monks: he would build a bridge at Pera! And why not? Was not Gentile Bellini the court painter of the conqueror of Constantinople? Did he not return "with magnificent gifts and the rank of knighthood," and proudly thereafter sign his pictures: *Eques auratus comesque palatinus*? Vittore Carpaccio probably also resided for a certain time in the East, finding there the models for the turbaned crowds which amuse us so much in his delicious Venetian pictures.

The most varied genius of this great epoch, the "divine" Lionardo da Vinci, had more than once the idea of going to take service with the Grand Seignior, and offering the Turk his profound inventions in mechanics and the science of war. Among the very rare works which have come down to us from the sculptor Bertoldo, Michelangelo's master in the Medicean Garden, there is a medal in honour of Mahomet II. These keen intellects of the Renaissance, it is evident, were very far from feeling for the infidel, for the iconoclast, that repugnance which we should naturally attribute to them. One's thoughts linger, strangely moved and variously agitated, nevertheless, upon this fantastic hypothesis of a Buonarroti transported suddenly to the Bosphoros,—reconstructing, perhaps, the *Aya Sofia*, instead of S. Peter's Basilica; and, in default of Vittoria Colonna, seeking out, late in life, some mufti or dervish with whom to discuss the grave problems of existence!

"Here, chalices are made into swords and helmets; the cross and the thorns become lances and shields; and Christ's blood is sold by the spoonful. He will never come again to these countries watered with His sweat, this Rome, which traffics in His skin, and the ways of salvation are henceforth closed! If ever I had desired to possess wealth, all work is now snatched from me, and *that man in the cloak*, like a Medusa, has changed me into inert stone! Up there in Heaven, poverty is welcomed, they say, but how can one hope for that better life, being led to it under standards like these!"

Thus is conceived a sonnet found among the posthumous papers of Michelangelo, written entirely by his own hand. I cannot understand how it is possible that there

should have been, up to this day, a mistake as to the date and meaning of these vengeful, exasperated lines. They belong, evidently, to this year 1506: they have in view Julius II., marching at the head of his troops against Perugia and Bologna; this is the farewell that the embittered artist, deceived in his hopes of fortune and fame, flings in the face of the Pope, "the man in the cloak," at the moment of taking refuge with the Sultan. They are signed: *Finis. Vostro Miccelagnuolo in Turchia.*<sup>1</sup>

"It would be better for you to return and die with the Pope than to go and live with the Grand Turk," said the good gonfalonier to the artist. Some time before this he had protested to Buonarroti that the latter had acted towards the Pontiff, in this matter, "as the King of France himself would not have dared to do. Let us have done with shifts and entreaties; we shall not make war with the Pope on account of you, nor shall we endanger the safety of the State; prepare to return to Rome." Julius II., still being urgent, in letters now dated from classic Felsina, Buonarroti at last yields, and sets off for Bologna, "a rope around my neck," he says in his curious letter to Fattucci, written twenty years later.

He arrives at Bologna early in December, 1506, and goes to hear mass in the church of San Petronio. He is recognised in church by a servant of the Pope, and is

<sup>1</sup>In publishing this sonnet for the first time, the nephew of Michelangelo refers it to the year 1527, and the sack of Rome; Mr. Springer does the same. The latest and very learned editor of the *Rime*, Signor Guasti (p. 157), explains, on the other hand, the signature *Finis. Vostro Miccelagnuolo in Turchia* as follows: *Quà in Roma, che par diventato un paese di Turchi!*



brought forthwith into the presence of the master, who is desirous to see him without delay. Julius II. is at table in the palace of the Bentivogli, one of the finest buildings at that time to be seen in Italy. All the Court is present at the pontiff's repast. "You have delayed long and we have been obliged to come to meet you!" exclaims the old man, exasperated at sight of the fugitive. Buonarroti kneels and makes his plea — he had not deserved the treatment received in Easter week. One of the courtiers present, a prelate, takes it upon himself to offer apologies for the culprit: one must be indulgent towards this race of artists who understand nothing outside their trade, and are often lacking in good manners. "How dare you," thunders Julius II., "say to this man things that I myself would not say? It is you who lack manners; to the devil with you!" At this blow, the unfortunate prelate is dismayed, he stumbles, is led out of the hall by the servants, and the Pope, in sign of pardon, bestows upon the sculptor the apostolic benediction. Could the picture be improved?

The reconciliation is now complete between these two *terribili*, and, as in the good Roman days, the Pope at Bologna frequently visits the sculptor in his studio behind the Cathedral; for already Buonarroti is again in harness. It is no longer a question of the famous mortuary monument; undeceive yourself on this point; there is something altogether new in hand, namely, a statue of Julius II., which is to be placed high upon the façade of San Petronio to celebrate the recovery of Bologna by the Holy See. It is to be a work in bronze, and, being concerted between

## The Statue at Bologna (1506-1507) 55

Rovere and Buonarroti, one may well suppose its proportions will not be ordinary: the statue is to be three times the size of life! The sculptor attacked the work with ardour; at the end of a few weeks he was able to show the master the model in clay. The pontiff is represented sitting, the triple crown upon his head, his right hand lifted. The gesture is haughty; it is almost violent, and Julius inquires if the lifted hand intends to bless or to curse. The sculptor answers with a singular pertinency, which well gives the lie to the prelate's charge that artists are a clownish folk: "The right hand lifted bids the Bolognese be obedient; but what shall the left hand hold, — a book?" "A sword, a sword; I am no scholar, not I!" is the characteristic response of Julius II. More sagacious than the pontiff, the artist, in the end, preferred to give to the left hand S. Peter's keys.

Remaining alone at Bologna, after the Pope's departure (February, 1507), Michelangelo pursues his task unremittingly, but under conditions constantly more and more difficult and irritating. An epidemic ravages the city; also the sculptor fails not to remark that the disposition of the people is changing, and turning against the régime but just now established and welcomed. He orders assistants from Florence and sends them away again immediately; he believes himself basely exploited by his comrades and regarded with hostility or undermined by all who come near him. For a word, awkwardly said, perhaps, but without the least intention of giving offence, he is very rough with poor Francesco Francia, favourite goldsmith and painter to the Bentivogli, the former lords

of the place. And did he not also, some months earlier, pick a quarrel much more offensively with a man much more illustrious, namely, Lionardo da Vinci? The latter, crossing the Piazza della Santa Trinità, in Florence, with a group of friends, calls out to Michelangelo, who is passing, to give them the explanation of a passage from Dante, which the party are at the moment discussing. "Explain it yourself," is the truly incredible answer, "you, who tried to make an equestrian statue in bronze and could not do it! Only those idiots of Milanese would have thought you could!"

It might be said that an avenging Fate turned against Michelangelo himself this most unfriendly reply to the great Lionardo: he, in turn, could not melt the metal in the furnaces of Bologna, and was obliged to have recourse to men who were experienced in foundry-work, with whom he had many disagreements. It was not until after fifteen months that the statue was completed. The 21st of February, 1508, "at the hour recognised as propitious by the astrologers," the statue of Julius II. was lifted to its niche over the portal of San Petronio, to the sound of drums, trumpets, and bells.

The astrologers had made some miscalculation; and the people of Bologna, on their part, were very far from remaining "obedient." They revolted, three years later (May 21, 1511), negotiated with the French, then at war with the Pope, and recalled their former masters, the Bentivogli; the citadel only, recently constructed by Julius II., held out for a time.

"Now there was," relates the Maréchal Fleuranges,

in his picturesque old French, "in the city of Boulone [Bologna], over the portal of the church, on high, a pope all in massive copper, which Pope Julius had caused to be made, which was as large as a giant, and could be seen from a great distance. The Bentivolles, having a spite at it, put ropes round its neck, and, by strength of men, pulled it down, and broke the neck of it. Then incontinent the Sieur de Bentivolle had it melted, made a double cannon of it, and in six days fired it at the castle." <sup>1</sup>

It is difficult to see how it was possible that, of so important a work of Buonarroti,—one of the very few statues that he ever completely finished, and the only bronze statue,—there should remain to us no engraving, no drawing, not even a description in any degree detailed and intelligible. Vasari, who never saw it, says in his conventional style that it was full of majesty and *terribilità*.

<sup>1</sup>Fleuranges made the entire campaign of 1511, and speaks as an eye-witness. But Signor Gozzadini (*Atti e Memoire. . . di Romagna*, 1889, pp. 242-45) maintains, following the Bolognese chroniclers, that the statue was not destroyed till near the close of the year 1511 (Dec. 30), many months after the taking of the castle, but by the orders of the Bentivogli, all the same. The fragments were said to have been sent to Alfonso, Duke of Ferrara, who made cannon of the metal, one especially large which he placed in front of his castle, and named the *Julia*.

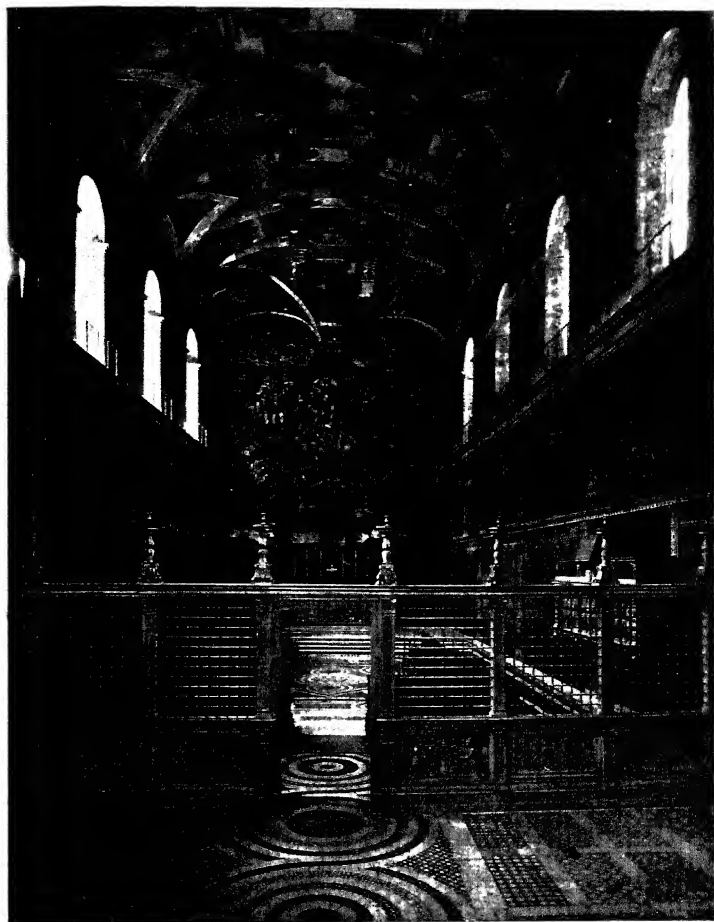
## CHAPTER V

### ON THE THRESHOLD OF THE SISTINA

IN looking back over his three years in the service of Julius II., Michelangelo, being what we know he was, must always have felt a certain rancour against "the man in the cloak," whose statue in bronze he had just now lifted to its place over the portal of San Petronio. The colossal conceptions of the mausoleum of S. Peter's, the fatigues of the long months in the quarries of Carrara, the hopes, too, of "gaining wealth," so ingenuously avowed in the angry sonnet of 1506,—of all this nothing had come, except a simple iconic monument in a provincial town, a monument which Rome would never know of, and in which the sculptor himself seems to have felt no very keen interest. It is indeed noteworthy that Buonarroti only rarely refers to this statue destroyed almost as soon as created; he, who speaks always with grief, with despair, of "the tragedy of the tomb," will never mention, among the wrongs done to his genius, the fate, very tragic, nevertheless, of his Bolognese work. And, during these three years, thus absolutely lost for his fame, other men in Rome—rivals and enemies—had worked without hindrance, had gained important successes! From Bologna he kept up a continuous correspondence with Giuliano da Sangallo, with Cardinal Alidosi, and











was well informed as to what went on in the Eternal City: he knew that Bramante was there extending more and more his activity and his influence; that the architect had with him a crowd of painters recently engaged (close of 1507) for the decoration of the new rooms in the Vatican Palace; that he kept open house and was regarded as the director of fine arts under the great pontificate. Something still more serious—Rome was filled with enthusiasm in respect to a master, by name Andrea Sansovino, who, invited in 1506 from Florence by Julius II., had already completed, in Santa Maria del Popolo, two superb things<sup>1</sup> which the world of connoisseurs extolled beyond measure, placing them above all that had ever been done before, proclaiming them the masterpieces of the age; and these were works of sculpture, these were funereal monuments! That Bramante had employed his art for the much-vaunted setting of these two tombs, that he had put his skill as architect at the service of the sculptor Andrea,—this could not but be one grief the more, the proof of a conspiracy set on foot against the author of the *Pietà* and the *David*.

We must, I think, bring together all these circumstances, in order to explain the very singular fact that when the laborious task at Bologna was finished, Michelangelo did not take the trouble to go to Rome and give account to the Pope of the completion and installation of the monument at San Petronio. He returned at once to Florence (end of February, 1508), and made arrangements

<sup>1</sup> Sansovino's two works at Santa Maria del Popolo belong to the years 1506-08. See Vasari, ed. Milanese, iv., 527.

there to resume the labours begun three years earlier by order of the Chapter and the Signory. Julius II., however, lost no time in calling him to Rome (end of March, 1508); and Buonarroti immediately obeyed,—reluctantly, the biographers say, but with the sad conviction that resistance would be useless. For my own part, I do not willingly admit this. Between these two men of destiny there was a mysterious attraction, stronger than any impulse of vexation or anger; and besides, with the sculptor, the desire of executing the predestined mausoleum must have been, after Sansovino's resounding successes, more ardent than before. The blocks of marble were still there in Rome, in the piazza near the studio, and so many "living figures" so long dreamed of were awaiting the magic blow of the mallet to shake off their shroud of stone! It is true that, as to this, Michelangelo was only too quickly undeceived. Julius II. was still occupied with his project for the Sistina, and would not listen to the excuse *non essendo io pittore*, again made to him by the author of the cartoon for the Palazzo Vecchio. Without doubt, it was only under stress, compelled, "a rope about the neck," that Buonarroti was to be brought to produce the greatest work of modern painting,—of any painting that the world has known.

"When I came back to Rome,"<sup>1</sup> he says later, in the letter to Fattucci already quoted, "the Pope did not allow me to complete the tomb, but ordered me to paint the vault of the Sistina, and it was agreed that for this he should pay me three thousand ducats. According to the

<sup>1</sup> *Lettere*, p. 427.

first project, I was to make the Twelve Apostles in the lunettes, and fill the rest with the usual ornaments. When I began, however, it seemed to me, and I immediately said so to the Pope, that this would never be more than a very poor thing. He asked me why, and I said because the Apostles themselves were very poor. Then he gave a new order: I should do what I pleased; and he would pay me accordingly."

In an autographic note, dated May 10, 1508, and preserved in the British Museum, the artist acknowledges the receipt of "five hundred ducats, good weight, on account of the painting in the chapel of Pope Sixtus, on which I begin work to-day, in accordance with the conditions of agreement in an act written by the Reverend Monsignor de Pavia (Alidosi) and signed by my hand."<sup>1</sup>

The obstinate will of the Rovere triumphed; the sculptor of the tomb made way (1508-12) for the painter of the Sistina. Ill, fevered, scarcely taking time to eat a crust of bread, for years he is perched at a dizzy height, on "a bridge"—Condivi calls it,—hanging from the roof, and there he paints, his head always thrown back. His eyesight suffered cruelly, and, long after, he could not read, or examine a drawing in any other way than *di giù in sopra*, his eyes raised to the ceiling. In this sombre

<sup>1</sup> *Lettere*, p. 563. Michelangelo did not, however, begin work on the frescos till October or November, 1508; the five or six months preceding were employed in the preparation of cartoons, the construction of the scaffolding, and the search for assistants (Granacci, Bugiardini, and others). The paintings of the vault were completely finished in 1512; the whole work, therefore, occupied four years and a half (May, 1508, to October, 1512).

and solitary chapel, the Pope will visit him at times,—coming from the Council where there has been discussion of important incidents in the League of Cambrai, returning from a campaign where some Romagnole city has been stormed; and the old man nearly seventy—who appears eighty, so wrinkled and bent is he—will climb resolutely the steep and winding stairs which from the outer wall lead up to the cornice of the windows, then will mount a shaking ladder, and so arrive upon the scaffolding at the painter's side. Once, strange questions and answers were heard under the Sistine vault: "When shall you finish?"—"When I can."—"Do you want me to throw you off this platform?" Returning to his apartment, the pontiff will send Accursio or some other chamberlain to beg pardon of the painter for the momentary anger; thus quarrels will end by reconciliations, great bursts of anger by *amorevolezze*.

There is, however, in these very extraordinary and original relations between Julius II. and Michelangelo, a certain obscure point, vexatious and embarrassing. Buonarroti, in his correspondence, complains very often and most bitterly of the difficulty he has in obtaining from the Pope his pay, even enough, he affirms, to reimburse him for his expenses. The biographers here do not fail to cry out upon the parsimony, the sordid avarice of Julius II.; but why does not Raffaello or Bramante, or any of the numerous architects, painters, and sculptors employed by the Rovere give utterance to similar complaints? It is well known, however, with what conspicuous luxury the young Santi delighted to surround

himself from his beginnings in Rome, and how expensive was the life of the architect of S. Peter's: "Pope Julius," his guest Caporali tells us concerning Bramante, "has made Master Donato rich in spite of himself, and has loaded him with benefices and pensions."<sup>1</sup> It seems probable that Raffaello and Bramante both deport themselves towards Julius II. as artists towards their Mæcenas: they understand well that the patron is not pleased to be importuned by requests for money, but that, in moments of satisfaction and generosity, he will reward a hundredfold the services rendered him. Michelangelo expects nothing from munificence, he asks only his due; but he asks it without ceremony or shyness,—brusque as a creditor, haughty as "a gentleman."<sup>2</sup>

For a man of gentle blood he knows himself to be,—of much nobler family than the Rovere with his tiara. Julius II. is of obscure race, probably a descendant of artisans: in his moments of anger, the King of France, Louis XII., calls the Pope "a peasant's son, who must be driven with a stick"<sup>3</sup>; while Michelangelo believes himself the scion of one of the oldest and noblest Italian

<sup>1</sup> Cesare Cesariano, *Vitruvio* (Como, 1521, p. 75). *Julio, quasi contro la voglia di esso Bramante . . . lo fece ricco e gli donò beneficii et officii de maxime pensione annuaria più che non bisognava asai a la sua decete vita*, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Michelangelo himself says that he worked for no one except the Popes, but under the pontificate of Julius II. he constantly made large provision for his own family, even buying lands in Tuscany, a manifest proof that he could not have been poor, whatever has been said.

<sup>3</sup> Despatch of the Florentine envoy to the King of France. Desjardins, *Négotiations diplomatiques*, ii., 220.

families. Rightly or wrongly, he is convinced that the Buonarroti descend from the illustrious house of Canossa, to which belonged the great Countess Matilda, "sovereign," says Condivi (and evidently under the master's dictation) "sovereign of Mantua, Lucca, Parma, Reggio, and that part of Tuscany which is now called the Patrimony of S. Peter." The sculptor carefully treasured in his archives the letter by which Count Alessandro da Canossa confirmed, in 1520, this kinship to the man of genius now become famous<sup>1</sup>; he took for heraldic device, a dog gnawing a bone (*canis ossa*), and he invariably employed his savings in the purchase of land in Tuscany: the desire of giving back their ancient distinction to his family, decayed in the vicissitudes of time, is one of the remarkable traits, human and touching also, in his long and laborious career.<sup>2</sup> Would it be a mistake to attribute to this reciprocal situation of Buonarroti and Della Rovere most of the stormy episodes which, from time to time, marked the very peculiar relations between the Pope and the artist? From time to time, the man of genius in his poverty may have remembered that he was a man of quality and of famous race, and that it was his kinswoman, the Countess Matilda, who had given these very Popes the Patrimony they now possessed!

Michelangelo is thirty-three years of age<sup>3</sup> as he crosses

<sup>1</sup> *Lettere*, p. 216.

<sup>2</sup> He writes in 1546 to his nephew Lionardo: *Noi siamo cittadini discesi di nobilissima stirpe. Mi non sempre ingegnato di risucitar la casa nostra, ma non ò avuto frategli da cid. . . . Lettere*, p. 197.

<sup>3</sup> To speak exactly, thirty-two years and two months; he was born March 15, 1475.

the threshold of that Sistine Chapel which was to render him immortal. He is short of stature, thickset, of delicate constitution, yet having great powers of endurance; he is left-handed, and he has an immense head. His long beard, his thick, slightly curling hair, his prominent cheek-bones, and the nose, broken by Torrigiano's brutal blow, give his face a strange and somewhat hirsute appearance; but the forehead is broad and noble, and the eyes have a profound and fascinating melancholy. Such we see him—only much older and with wrinkled forehead—in the portrait in the Gallery of the Capitol which is attributed to Marcello Venusti.<sup>1</sup> It is strange, however, that none of the famous masters of the epoch thought of reproducing Buonarroti's features. Raffaello, taking all his frescos and easel pictures together, gives us an almost complete gallery of the men of mark in Rome in his time: Julius II., Leo X., and the future Pope Clement VII.; Francesco Maria, Duke of Urbino, Giuliano de' Medici,

<sup>1</sup> Hall IV., No. 134; the painting has been much retouched. The Capitol has also (Palace of the Conservatori, Hall V.) an admirable bronze head, probably from the model by Daniele da Volterra, made at the time of Michelangelo's death. The same Volterra has also given the features of Michelangelo to the figure of an apostle in his fresco of *The Assumption* at the Trinità de' Monti, in Rome (facing the *Descent from the Cross*); it is the apostle in the foreground, at the right, in a light red cloak; he is leaning against a pillar and pointing to the Virgin. Buonarroti here has thin, curling hair and a beard entirely white. In the great Hall of the Cancelleria, which Vasari decorated "in a hundred days," in the reign and to the glory of Paul III., we see Michelangelo in a group composed of Sadoletto, Reginald Pole, Bembo, Contarini, Paolo Giovio, and others. Vasari himself speaks of this portrait of Buonarroti in his autobiography at the end of his *Vite*.



the Duke de Nemours, Castiglione, Bibbiena, Bindo Altoviti, Sigismondo de' Conti, and Inghirami; Ariosto, Perugino, Bramante, and a host of others. But you will seek vainly in this gallery the immortal painter of the Sistine. Raffaello is indeed excusable; he was under no obligation to do honour to his great rival, always scornful and sometimes very rude towards him. But Sebastian del Piombo, surely, was neither a rival nor a person maltreated; he missed no opportunity to curry favour with Michelangelo, to cozen him, above all, to prejudice him against the young Urbinate and his followers, "the Synagogue," as he called them. He was, moreover, the greatest portrait-painter at that time living in Rome; why did he not hold himself in honour bound to bequeath to posterity the image of his "divine master," as he was wont to call Buonarroti? He preferred to hand down to us the insolent features of the infamous Aretino, and so also did Titian, the splendid egotist,—notwithstanding all the flattering things he took occasion to say concerning Michelangelo, at the time of his Roman visit, in 1546. It is true that at that very time Michelangelo was declaring that the great Venetian could not draw!<sup>1</sup>

That great story-teller, Benvenuto Cellini, affirms that

<sup>1</sup> Bernini's narrative is most characteristic: "Paul III., at that time building the Farnese palace, told Michelangelo to see a *Venus* that Titian, who had come to Rome, had painted. After he had looked at it carefully, the Pope asked him what he thought of it. 'God has done well what He has done,' Michelangelo replied, 'for if those painters knew how to draw they would be angels, and not men.'"—*Journal du voyage de Bernini en France*, published by the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, xvii., p. 352.









he has from the lips of the offender himself the story of the frightful scene when Michelangelo received his life-long disfigurement.

"We were boys together, Buonarroti and I," said Torigiano, "and often went to the church of the Carmine to study in the chapel of Masaccio. Buonarroti, who was accustomed to sneer at all of us who were copying there, made me one day particularly angry; I gave him such a blow in the face that I felt the bone and cartilage of his nose break down under my fist. He will bear the mark of it while he lives."<sup>1</sup>

Reading this atrocious thing, one is not sorry to know from Vasari that this brute—half artist and half cut-throat, soldier of Cesare Borgia, and sculptor much admired at the Court of England—ended his days miserably in the prison of the Spanish Inquisition. I can hardly venture to doubt, however, that the conduct of the youthful Buonarroti, in the chapel of Masaccio, was of an irritating kind. At a maturer age, he was scarcely more gracious towards Perugino, towards Francia, towards Signorelli, towards Lionardo da Vinci, towards Bramante, Raffaello, or Antonio da Sangallo.

He is not cordial, and he is anything but affable, let us frankly admit. Sad and sombre in disposition, sensitive to excess and aggressive without cause, irritable and irritating,<sup>2</sup> he equally misplaces his affections and his

<sup>1</sup> Benvenuto Cellini, *Mem.*, I., chap. xiii.

<sup>2</sup> "It is singular that Michelangelo's correspondence with his father, with Luigi del Riccio, with Tommaso dei Cavalieri, and with his nephew, all of whom he loved sincerely, should close

antipathies, and he is ready to complain without well choosing his grounds or his confidants. Sober as an anchorite, scrupulous as no one of his artist rivals, he nevertheless has quarrels with everybody about money—with Julius II., with the Medici, with the Duke of Urbino, and even with poor unfortunate Signorelli, whose great age and great merit he would have done better to respect.<sup>1</sup> He believes himself to be shamefully exploited, and so, indeed, he is,—especially by those to whom he addresses his ingenuous lamentations, his own family most of all, who fleece him pitilessly. Nervous and imaginative, he attaches special importance to dreams and omens; he has sometimes strange hallucinations, inconceivable terrors; under the sway of these obsessions, he will take at critical moments ill-considered resolutions, compromising to his own peace, compromising even to his fame, as at the time of the siege of Florence.

His heart is eminently good, however, and affectionate, with an almost feminine tenderness and delicacy. "Those who only know Michelangelo in his works, know only that of him which is least perfect," Vittoria Colonna said of him later. His correspondence testifies on every page to his profound attachment to his father and all his other kindred, also to his touching solicitude in regard to old servants, their widows and orphans; his alms are as abundant as they are discreet. Remark, however, the upon a note of petulance and wrath. The fact is no doubt accidental. But it is strange."—J. A. Symonds, *Life of Michelangelo*, vol. ii., p. 313.

<sup>1</sup> See his truly inexcusable letter on the subject of the money owed him by Signorelli, *Lettere*, p. 391.

aristocratic feeling which shows even in these acts of liberality and benevolence. He employs the first money he has earned in placing his father beyond danger of want; he buys him a piece of ground, that the old man "may live as a gentleman should." He proposes to make his nephew Lionardo his principal legatee, and urges him to marry.

"Do not consider the question of dowry, but of a worthy character in the bride. I think at Florence there must be more than one noble but impoverished family with whom it would be charity to form an alliance. It could not be said that you were seeking to ennoble yourself by marriage, for it is well known that we are as ancient and as noble a house as any in Florence."<sup>1</sup>

Again he bids him "seek out some needy Florentine who has daughters to marry or to place in a convent, and give him aid secretly. But beware of imposters. I mean citizens, for I know that such are ashamed to ask for help when they are in want." And again:

"I should be glad to have you let me know if you hear of any citizen of rank who is in distress, especially if there are children in the family, that I may do something for him. Be careful to give where there is real want, and not out of considerations of kinship or affection, but for the love of God. Do not say whence comes the help."

To the same nephew he writes on another occasion:

"Say to the priest [Fattucci] not to address his letters *Michelangelo scultore*, for I am known here as Michelangelo Buonarroti. I have never been a painter or sculptor like those who have a shop (*come chi ne fà bottega*). I

<sup>1</sup> *Lettere*, p. 237.



have never been willing to do this, out of consideration for the honour of my parents and brothers. I have been in the service of three Popes, it is true, but to this I was obliged.”<sup>1</sup>

These singular words were written late in life, but they throw light upon the entire past, and chiefly upon those stormy years of youth, now under consideration.

With the ideas and the manners of our time it requires an effort to understand accurately the *rôle* and the social position of those Italian masters of the Quattrocento, half artists and half artisans: tradesmen with their *bottega* upon the street; heads of workshops, who required from their pupils (*garzoni*) an apprentice's premium; contractors making minute written agreements for each order from their clients. In these contracts everything is settled and provided for: the dimensions of the sculpture or the painting, the number of the figures, their attributes, the quality of the pigments, especially of the aquamarine and the gold. The artist pledges himself naïvely to do as well as this or that *maestro* of renown, to do even better, “as well as any man whosoever,” so says Lionardo da Vinci in his famous letter to Ludovico il Moro!<sup>2</sup> Some-

<sup>1</sup> *Lettere*, p. 225.—The three Popes are Julius II., Leo X., and Clement VII. Michelangelo had no affection for any one of these pontiffs; in his writings (letters or poetry) there is not a single truly kind word in reference to any one of them, while there are many complaints in speaking of the “tragedy of the tomb.” To Buonarroti the *Sepoltura* was never an affair of the heart; it was, first, a matter of ambition, and secondly, a matter of money. The only Pope of whom the artist speaks kindly and with regret is Paul III. Farnese. See *Lettere*, p. 260.

<sup>2</sup> Bottari, *Raccolta di lettere*, i., 467.

times the payment is made (partly, at least; in food and clothes; and though the price has been settled in advance, it will often become necessary to appeal after the work is done to the judgment of experts and verifiers. Orders for work come most frequently from the Signory, that is to say, the municipality; next, from religious communities; lastly, from private individuals, rich merchants, or bankers. Willingly, also, the painter goes "outside," on being called, to some neighbouring, or even rival, city to decorate a church or a chapel, but when the work is finished, he hastens to return "to his own country," to his family, and his *bottega*. Exception must be made in the case of Fra Angelico, Lorenzo Monaco, and their like: these humble monks laboured, as a rule, for their Order only, and only "for the glory of God."

About the middle of the Quattrocento, the communes, the republics, after an existence long prosperous and active, declined, became enfeebled, disappeared, even, by degrees; and in their place arise the powerful houses of the Medici, Sforza, Gonzaga, Este, Bentivogli, Montefeltri, Malatesta, and others. These princely Courts, to which must be added that of the Popes, since their return from Avignon, surround themselves—as much from taste as from policy—with all the splendours that had been the glory of the free cities, and attract artists. The artists come willingly; they execute the works required of them; they seek to please and to succeed; the great success is to be permanently established at the Court of a prince who is a lover of beautiful things. Thus Mantegna is attached to the Gonzaghe, Lionardo da Vinci

to the Sforze, Cosimo Tura to the Estensi, Francia to the Bentivogli, Mino and Pinturicchio to the masters of the Vatican. A kind of artistic servitude is thus established, tempered, it is true, by that friendly simplicity, that affability, which is one of the charming traits of the period. Everything is done to gratify the caprices of the Mæcenæ; on the other hand, much is expected from his liberality. This expectation is made known to him in metaphor, or otherwise, always without diffidence, and sometimes in a very doleful tone. An instance of this is a curious letter, "full of tears" written by that clever rascal Fra Filippo Lippi to Piero de' Medici, begging him to have pity on the painter's poverty and on that of his *six nieces*, "all of marriageable age and not yet married."<sup>1</sup> If disappointed in his hopes, the artist changes his abode and his protector, going from one city to another, to offer his talent, as the *condottieri* earlier offered their swords and the humanists their eloquence. Lionardo da Vinci puts himself by turns, and with a frankness which offends no one, at the service of Ludovico il Moro, of Cesare Borgia, and of the King of France, the invader of Milan. The artist becomes indifferent to his country, to his native city, to liberty; family ties are weakened, morals grow loose, and all piety is blunted. It is very significant, in this respect, that the painter of the most devout pictures of the period, the master of Raffaello himself, Perugino, is reputed to have been an unbeliever. For a moment the preaching of Savonarola again reaches men's minds, and produces a violent shock: a few painters even, Fra Bar-

<sup>1</sup> Gaye, *Carteggio*, i., 141. The letter is dated Aug. 13, 1439.

tolommeo, Lorenzo di Credi, Botticelli, receive from it a deep and lasting impression. But if you ask for the true disciple, the elect one, upon whom fell the mantle of the great Dominican when he vanished in the flames, no other name can be mentioned than that of the young Buonarroti.

He has no share in the facile manners of the time; for him there is no Fornarina. Disfigured very early—*privo piangendo d'un bel volto humano*, as he says himself in a most pathetic verse,<sup>1</sup>—he never knew, as a young man, “the soft chain of white arms” about his neck, of which the happy Raffaello Santi was to speak,<sup>2</sup> and his youth is barren of all joy and tender affection. Let other men employ a questionable ingenuity in discovering some Eros at once chaste and perverse,<sup>3</sup> in his platonic poetry, —composed, almost all of it, in the decline of life, *negli anni assai*; for my part, that which strikes me in his sonnets, in his letters, in all his work, is to find there neither mention nor suggestion of the merry, jocular authors so much in vogue at that time, nothing which brings to mind Pulci, Ariosto, Boccaccio; his own favourite reading is the *poema sacro* of Dante, the sermons of Savonarola, the Bible, especially the Old Testament, whose fierce,

<sup>1</sup> *Rime*, edition Guasti, p. 102.

<sup>2</sup> “*Quanto fu dolce el giogo e la catena  
De suoi candidi braci al col mio volti.*”

Sonnet of Raffaello, written with his own hand on a page of sketches for the great fresco of the *Disputa*. The page is preserved at Oxford. Robinson, *Critical Account*, pp. 189 and 357.

<sup>3</sup> See among others L. V. Shepper, *Michel-Angelo, eine Renaissancestudie*, Altenburg, 1892.

imposing heroes fascinate his imagination. A man of good family, "noble as any in Florence," he seeks no Courts of princes; but he has a horror too of the *bottega*, and not less a horror of Bohemia,—if it be permitted to employ that expression in speaking of the sixteenth century. The zeal of his house hath eaten him up; it is to restore it that he labours, that he is urgent to have his pay in full and even would be glad "to gain wealth"; his personal needs and pleasures are of the simplest, the most summary. He has not the vagabond humour of a Lionardo, a Perugino, an Andrea Sansovino; it is but in a moment of despair, in a fit of discouragement, that he forms the project of Constantinople or of Paris, only to abandon it at once; his two poles of attraction remain always Florence and Rome, the city of his birth, which he loves as a patriot, and the Eternal City, which alone can offer him a field vast enough for his gigantic conceptions. Family, country, liberty, honour,—these are not idle words to him: they make all his moral being vibrate; but they rend it also, in the midst of the unconquerable contradictions of life; and the rendings will become more and more tragic as the contradictions grow greater. Profoundly religious, he has that thirst after the infinite which is the torment while it is the mark of honour of elect souls, and the grave problems of life, of the creation, of righteousness, and of salvation, preoccupy him as they do no one among his rivals, no one, I dare to say, among his contemporaries in Italy. He is the *Pensieroso* of the Renaissance.

In his vocation of artist, he brings to all that he under-

takes, or even attempts, a conscientious energy, a gravity that is almost terrible. And, for example, that naturalism which is the great thought of the Quattrocento he pursues quite otherwise than did a Donatello, an Uccello, a Pollajuolo, an Andrea del Castagno; he carries his study of nature into its most sombre and frightful recesses, he follows it beyond the limits of life, into the very shadow of death,—among the corpses that he dissects year after year, in the hospital of San Spirito. It is the same in regard to classic antiquity, whose models more and more known and appreciated, invited the skill of the fifteenth century. Michelangelo does not limit himself to merely borrowing from this antiquity certain details of decoration, of adjustment, of drapery, of ornamentation, as did, before his time, “the precursors of the Renaissance”; he struggles hand to hand with the classic models collected in the Medicean Gardens, and he reproduces centaurs, cupids, the Bacchus, the Hercules, freely and with independence. He sees at a glance and from his first attempts in Florence, what neither a Donatello nor a Mantegna ever saw, notwithstanding all their genius; he recognises and appropriates the fundamental principle of ancient sculpture, that the expression of the head is by no means the *omne tulit punctum*, but that the same breath of life must animate and penetrate equally all parts of the body. But, on the other hand, he comprehends much less the *mystic* principle in Christian art, or rather, he comprehends only too well, and by intuition, how that element is, in its nature, destructive of all form, and openly hostile to the world of the senses. He will never

dwell in the ethereal regions of Orcagna and Fra Angelico, nor ever will he speak the language of symbols and emblems, so dear to the masters of the Trecento; the sculptor, the plastic artist will be in this regard stronger in him than the disciple of Savonarola, stronger than the enthusiastic reader of Dante. His empyrean will never be a dream, a vision, as it was to the monk of Fiesole; he will require the three dimensions of every object — of all the things that are; his allegories will not be merely the known and circumstantial signs of certain ideas, as with Giotto; they will assume to be their inherent, their absolute personification.

He is not, however, so far from the thought of Giotto and of Giovanni Pisano as one might at first sight be tempted to believe; he even comes very near them, in his instinctive search for an art more ideal and monumental, more energetic and impassioned, than was known to the generation of the latter years of the fifteenth century, the generation of Mino, of Ghirlandaio, of Perugino. This instinct is already revealed in the relief of the *Centaur*, preserved in the *Casa Buonarroti*, a composition entirely juvenile, but of astounding force and impetuosity; it breaks out in its full strength when Michelangelo, at one-and-twenty, touches, for the first time, the soil of Rome, and is allowed to contemplate the stately ruins and the wondrous marbles of the Eternal City. At sight of these, his genius breaks forth, and the *daimon* within him is unchained.

## CHAPTER VI

### ROMAN MARBLES

ONE of the most charming and most sincerely emotional pages of the humanist literature of the fifteenth century is, in my judgment, the little essay of Poggio Bracciolini, entitled *De fortunæ varietate urbis Romæ*. Seated one day with his honourable colleague, Antonio Loschi, on the hill of the Capitol, "like Marius amid the ruins of Carthage," the Apostolic Secretary of Martin V. casts a saddened glance over this city, which formerly ruled the world, and now lies extended at his feet, "like the lifeless body of a giant, despoiled of his weapons, and covered with wounds." Even more sad than its overthrowing by foreign foes seems to Poggio the ravages which the city has never ceased to make upon itself. This building opposite, with the double row of arcades, which is now the public storehouse of salt, was once the Tabularium,—the great record-office of the Republic,—where were preserved, on tables of bronze, the laws and the treaties of the people-king; the salt now gnaws its walls, its pillars, even the inscription of the edifice; it is only with difficulty that the name of Q. Lutatius Catulus can be deciphered! "The first time that I was in this city, the temple of Concord below us" (of *Saturn*, rather) "was still standing, and almost entire: since then, the inhabitants have com-



pletely destroyed the marble edifice,—a few columns of the portico alone remaining.” And the humanist pursues in this vein his variations, full of a learned melancholy upon the sad theme of *locus ubi Roma fuit*, enumerating the temples, the porticos, the thermæ, the theatres, the aqueducts, the arches, the palaces, all vanished, or in ruins. Among the marble statues still preserved, Poggio names but five, and among these the *Horse-Tamers* (of Monte Cavallo), at that time in the Baths of Constantine. The *Marcus Aurelius* in bronze had its place before the Lateran. He relates also that in his time there had been disinterred, in a garden near Santa Maria sopra Minerva, “a reclining statue, larger than any that had yet been found in the city,”—the *Nile*, namely, now one of the finest ornaments of the Braccio Nuovo—but that the proprietor, annoyed by the crowd of visitors brought around him by the discovery, had chosen to reinter it.

Very different from this picture, drawn by Bracciolini in the year 1430, was the aspect which Rome presented near the close of the same century, at the moment when the young Michelangelo saw it for the first time (the summer of 1496). Under the sway of the humanist Popes, the indifference of other days for the masterpieces of antiquity had given place, in the City of the Seven Hills, to a passionate enthusiasm, to a cult almost a state religion. It was still the practice, it is true (and alas! remained so long after this time), to *ruin the ruins*, to take away for various buildings in process of construction blocks of stone and columns from the Colosseum and from the theatre of Marcellus; but the smallest fragments of classic









sculpture, on the other hand, were eagerly sought for, were bought at any price, and were treasured with jealous care. In search of them the soil of Rome and of the Campagna was ransacked again and again; Ostia especially was an inexhaustible mine of precious sculptures. Already Nicholas V. had made a beginning of the Museum of the Capitol, and Sixtus IV. had further enriched it. Paul II. had made for himself another Museum in his palace of San Marco. Following the example of the pontiffs every man in Rome who prided himself on good taste and culture, the cardinals Riario, Savelli, Grimani, the bishop Colocci,—made it a point to have his collection of *anticaglie*, as was the expression of the day. The most successful, the most intelligent of these collectors is the Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere, bishop of Ostia, and future Pope. Rudely handled in the political warfare of the Borgia reign, driven even to take refuge in France for a time, he nevertheless had been able to collect in his splendid palace of the Santi Apostoli (now the Colonna) or in his cardinalic dwelling near San Pietro in Vincoli, a quantity of those magnificent marbles that were destined before many years to form the splendour of the Belvedere.

With such means of information as are now at our disposal, it is unfortunately not possible to make an exact list of the antique sculptures which Rome possessed in the last years of the fifteenth century; but it is quite beyond doubt that in number as well as in quality they incomparably surpassed all those that Lorenzo the Magnificent had been able to collect in Florence. In the Medicean

Gardens, the young Michelangelo had had before him nothing beyond models of the second or third order<sup>1</sup>: it was only on the banks of the Tiber that the true masterpieces of classic art were revealed to him; and tradition treasures up more than one winged and rapturous word spoken by him at sight of many a marble which we now see in Rome.<sup>2</sup> Add to this the effect that Rome of itself produced, with its monuments and ruins, with its memories and its horizons, the kind of shock and enlargement, to use Goethe's expressive word, that it never fails to give to every soul of noble lineage; and one can have some idea of the vast revolution which must have taken place at this time in the mind of Bertoldo's pupil.

I am not unaware that critics who speak with authority have recently conceived the idea of ascribing the honour of this revolution to another city than Rome, and to other than Roman models; the impassioned and superb sculptures of Jacopo della Quercia in the portal of San Petronio

<sup>1</sup> The most remarkable of the antiques now in the Uffizi, such as the *Arrotino*, the *Wrestlers*, the group of *Niobe*, were not yet discovered at the period of which we speak.

<sup>2</sup> In his precious opusculc *Delle Statue antiche che per tutta Roma si veggono* (1550) Ulisse Aldrovandi notes briefly Michelangelo's opinion upon more than one of these marbles. Among the favourite works of the great artist, Ulisse mentions the *Lion Devouring a Horse*, which is now in the court of the Palace of the Conservatori. Buonarroti also greatly admired the sculptures of the Column of Trajan. After having spoken one day to Paul III. in regard to merits and faults of Titian and the Venetian painters, Michelangelo ended with the words: "It is only in Rome that there is a Trajan's Column,"—at least, so Bernini relates. (*Journal du voyage de Bernini en France*, published by the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, xxxi., 224.

are thought to have struck the attention and transformed the talent of the young Michelangelo as early as the year 1494, in the few months spent by him in Bologna. That I venture, however, to refuse my adherence to an opinion at the present day very much in favour is because the productions of the young Buonarroti in this same Bologna, in 1494, or immediately after, in Florence,<sup>1</sup> seem to me in no way to manifest that change of style, which, on the other hand, at once begins to appear with the Roman epoch. I am far from denying the influence, and strong reminiscences, even, of the old Siennese sculptor's work in the work of Michelangelo; but (with the exception perhaps of some details of drapery and adjustment) they become really conspicuous, it seems to me, only in the vault of the Sistine, after the second stay in Bologna, in 1507, a stay much more prolonged and significant, during which was elaborated the bronze statue of Julius II. Certain great aspects of the ancient Tuscan masters (not alone of Jacopo, but also of Donatello and of Ghiberti) unperceived at first by Bertoldo's pupil, were finally — indeed, many years later—better felt and assimilated by the artist, now much older and having his visual field prodigiously

<sup>1</sup> The *Angel of the Candelabra*, and the *San Petronio* of Bologna; the *Satyr* in the antique group restored (*Bacchus and Satyr*) of the Uffizi; the *Giovannino* (much disputed) in the Museum of Berlin. As to the *Adonis* of the Bargello, I have no question that it belongs to a much later period; its agitated pose is identically the same with that of the Provinces trodden under foot by Victories in the design in the Uffizi for the tomb of Julius II. Mr. Heath Wilson asserts even that the *Adonis* is of Saravezza marble (p. 31); in which case the statue must be of much later date, the quarries of Saravezza not having been opened till 1517.



broadened by his residence on the banks of the Tiber. But it was from these banks that came, I must boldly assert, the decisive impulse, the initiative in all things. For the genius of Michelangelo as well as for that of Bramante and Raffaello, the Eternal City was the supreme revealer, and the true *Alma parens*: "To be surprised," wrote Buonarroti himself, nearly forty years later,—“to be surprised that Rome produces divine men, is as if one should be surprised that God works miracles.”<sup>1</sup> These emphatic words were addressed, very inappropriately, it is true, to the famous Ser Tommaso de’ Cavalieri; but we shall make no mistake in applying them to the architect of S. Peter’s, the painter of the *Disputa*, and the sculptor of the *Pietà*.

Among the classic masterpieces which were known to the young Buonarroti from this first residence in Rome, we are now able to mention with certainty the radiant statue of the son of Latona which still holds the place of honour in the Vatican.<sup>2</sup> Discovered some years earlier,

<sup>1</sup> *Perchè quanto è da maravigliarsi che Dio facci miracoli tant’ è che Roma produca uomini divini. Lettere*, p. 462.

<sup>2</sup> It had been uncertain at what date the *Apollo* was brought to light,—general opinion, however, inclining to the year 1500,—when, in 1887, a discovery made in the Escorial, by Justi the eminent biographer of Winckelmann and of Velasquez, threw a very strong light upon this question. It was a book of Italian sketches, collected about 1491, containing a drawing of the statue of the *Apollo Belvedere*, the left arm still lacking, and the note added: *Nel orto di San-Petro in Vinchola*. There is every reason to believe that the *Apollo* was found during the pontificate of Innocent VIII. (See *Jahrbuch d. deutsch. Archäolog. Institutes*, v., 1890, article of M. Ad. Michaelis); and it can no longer be doubted that Michelangelo was familiar with it during his first residence in Rome, and before he executed the group of the *Pietà*.









in one of the numerous suburban *tenute* of Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere (probably at Grotta Ferrata), it at that time adorned the garden of his house near the church San Pietro in Vincoli. It has become the fashion latterly to depreciate this *Apollo*, once so much extolled; to declare it too elaborate and affected, not to say conceited and attitudinising. "All he needs is the *grand cordon* of a foreign order," a friend—a man of fine taste—said to me lately. We have become very hard to please and very important,—insolently disgusted, even,—since a generous chance has given us to know the Elgin marbles, the *Venus of Melos*, the *Hermes* of Praxiteles; we fear to be the dupes of misinformed enthusiasm, and imagine ourselves proving our own superiority when we burn that which Winckelmann adored. I question, however, if even to-day we know, in all the world, an antique statue which surpasses or equals the *Apollo* of the Vatican as an incarnation of human beauty, of virile beauty, "nude, clothed only with an immortal springtime," to borrow the language of good old Winckelmann himself; I speak, be it observed, of a statue present and real, a detached figure entire and complete, not of an esthetic entity, which with great use of erudite deduction we are pleased to construct, after some passage of Pausanias or Pliny, after some relief or fragment of bust or torso found on the Acropolis or in Olympia. All the *verba magistri* of the University will not hinder me from sharing the feeling of the contemporaries of Julius II., and finding in the *Apollo* of the Belvedere an ineffable poetry, a marvellous radiance. Is it not wonderful, also, that the god of light

and of the arts, that the great Musagetes should have emerged from under ground, suddenly, at this solemn hour of the Renaissance; that he should have made his dwelling with the Rovere, and received the earliest homage of Michelangelo?

This homage was paid by the young sculptor when he sought inspiration in the god of light as here represented for the Christ of his *Pietà* (1498-99). That this remark has not been made long ago is due, I think, to the uncertainty in which we all were till very lately as to the date when the *Apollo* was discovered, and also to the unlucky position in which Buonarroti's group is placed in S. Peter's. The contrast is extraordinary, indeed, and seems almost to have been the effect of some deep malice of fate; the *Moses*, conceived originally as looking off from his high place on the second stage of the great mausoleum, fifteen feet above one's head, now, in the Pope's abridged monument, rests heavily upon the ground, directly on a level with the eye; while the group of the *Pietà*, designed for the level view, has been placed high, upon a huge altar, so that it is withdrawn from our sight,—the figure of the Christ especially becoming almost invisible. If, however, by changing your position in all possible ways, you succeed in grasping this admirable figure in its details and in its entity you will without doubt become aware that never did Michelangelo so successfully represent human beauty in all grandeur and simplicity; also, that never did he attain, or even aim at, a distinction, an elegance so faultless. There is no trace here of that impetuosity and muscular redundancy which marks so strongly, and

often mars so strangely, his formidable anatomy; the flesh has a velvety, exquisite softness; the polish, incomparably finished and harmonious, creates for the Son of Man a kind of luminous atmosphere which heightens the effect of the figure, and detaches it from the rest of the composition. Observe, then: beauty, elegance, finish, and this peculiar lustre,—these are the qualities which even at a glance appear in the statue of the Belvedere. Now, since it is agreed that in this *Pietà* the sculpture of the Renaissance made a closer approach to the classic ideal than in any other of its creations,—since the four centuries from Condivi's time until now have not ceased to proclaim this fact — where else, think you, did Buonarroti seek his classic model, than in the Garden of Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere, by the church of San Pietro in Vincoli?

A Christ taken down from the cross, dead, denuded, and yet beautiful,—beautiful not only in expression and feature, but beautiful in form,—beautiful as the *Apollo*,—it was thus that Michelangelo ventured to conceive a subject in which all earlier sculptors had seen only a sad and lugubrious theme. Every mark of the death-struggle, of suffering, or of mortuary rigidity is carefully banished from these contours, which remain divine though dead; the stigmata are lacking; there is not the slightest suggestion that violence has been inflicted<sup>1</sup>; neither is there the halo; or rather, one might say, it rests upon the

<sup>1</sup> The great cross behind the group, as it stands in the chapel in S. Peter's, is a later addition, not at all in harmony with the original idea.



whole figure, covering it with a vibrating lustre which is like the perfume of the soul, like that ambrosia with which Homer at times enveloped the gods of his Olympus. With the head gently thrown back, the curling hair, the almost beardless face, with the limbs reposing rather than sinking, the dead Christ is like a child again,—a child, as before, lying in the arms of the mother, whose great cloak with its broad, heavy folds forms a sombre, massive background for the figure. The mother is young also, young and beautiful as when she cradled her child upon her knees; her face, bent over him, expresses love rather than grief; the left hand only, extended and opened, has an expressive gesture which seems to say: "Is there any sorrow like unto my sorrow?" It is with this purely classic moderation that the artist has treated the great tragedy of Golgotha; it is in this language of Sophocles that he relates the Passion! "The early Christians," it has been very justly said, "the Christians who were yet animated by the breath of classic art, would thus have represented the *Pietà*." And, indeed, in the presence of this work of Michelangelo, one's thought unconsciously recurs to some gentle painting of the catacombs, some mosaic of the *Good Shepherd* in the mausoleum of Galla Placidia at Ravenna.

The *Pietà* was one of the latest works of the young Buonarroti during this residence in Rome late in the fifteenth century; his earlier Roman works are far from presenting the character of tranquillity, I was about to say, of gentle emotion, which surprises and charms us in this group. His *Cupid* (or rather, *Apollo*?) and his

*Bacchus*, both executed earlier (1497-98) for Jacopo Gallo,<sup>1</sup> have, on the contrary, that sharp accent of tension and agitation which was to increase with years, and become the ineffaceable stamp of his Promethean genius.

How gladly would one follow the development of that genius, during these five Roman years (1496-1500)! What a pleasure, also, to know the impression that men and things, at that time, in Rome made upon him! It was the pontificate of Alexander VI., and Cesare Borgia was beginning his career of perfidies and crimes. On the 14th of July, 1497, took place that assassination of the Duke of Gandia which shocked the world, and is recalled in a style so placid by Burchard, the master of ceremonies. The Italian soil still trembled under the tramp of the armies of Charles VIII., passing and repassing, like a cyclone; and men were all the time looking for new invasions. From Florence came tidings daily of strifes between *piagnoni* and *arrabiati*, and of the triumphs and the extravagances of Savonarola.

Michelangelo was no *piagnone*, no fanatical and active partisan of the Ferrarese reformer. During all this memorable struggle in Florence, he remained quietly in the City of the Seven Hills, occupied with his labours, caring for his art. It is a great mistake to represent him as a consistent, uncompromising republican, eager for action and combat; he was above all things an artist, and concerned himself in politics only by fits and starts, immediately regretting that he had done so, and never

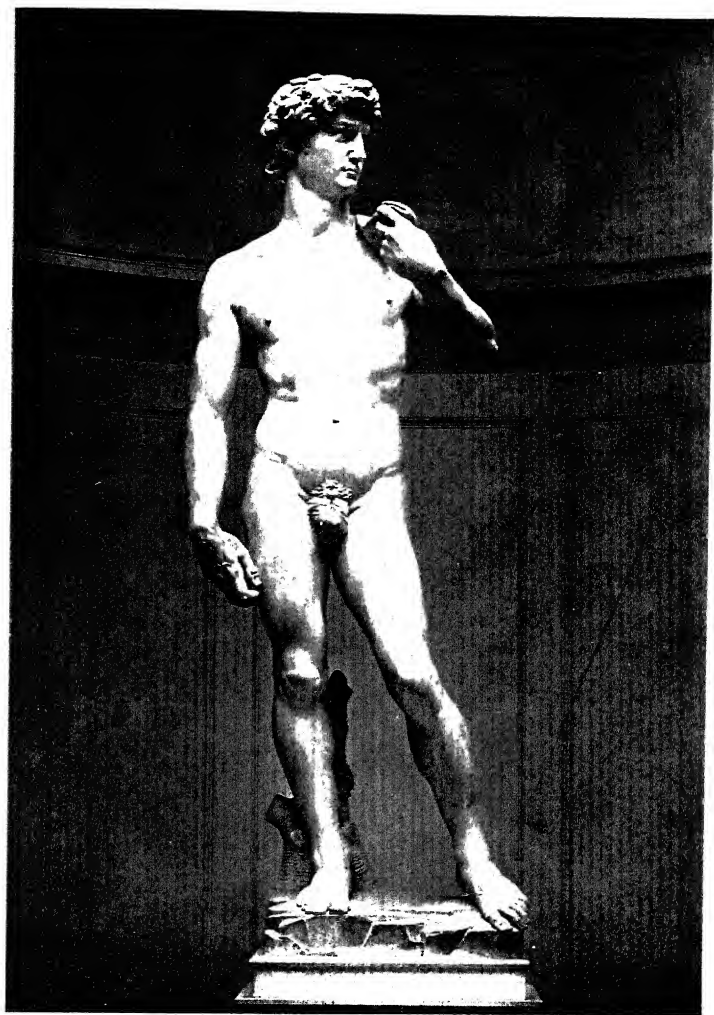
<sup>1</sup> The *Cupid* is now in the Kensington Museum, the *Bacchus* in the Bargello.

prohibiting himself from a return to "the tyrants." His devotion to the Prior of San Marco did not prevent his soliciting an order from Cardinal Raffaello Riario, or from accepting one (for the *Pietà*) from the Cardinal of Saint Denis; as, in after years, while directing the defence of San Miniato, he still went on with his Medicean mausoleum. It is nevertheless true that he had a deep and ardent admiration for Savonarola and retained it to the end of his life. His elder brother Lionardo, carried away by the eloquence of the tribune-monk, had become a Dominican; he himself was always in communication with Sandro Botticelli, at that time in full sympathy with the *piagnoni*; and he wrote to his other brother in March, 1497, to employ all means to induce the "santo Fra Girolamo" to come to Rome, never doubting that a few sermons from "the prophet" would suffice to bring all the Roman world "to adore him."

It was for the Cardinal of Saint Denis, as I have said (more exactly, the Cardinal Jean Villiers de la Groslaié, abbé of Saint Denis and French ambassador at Rome), that Buonarroti executed the *Pietà*, and we are still in possession of the contract made in the artist's name (himself then absent, in Carrara) by his friend Jacopo Gallo, who adds, on his own account: "And I, Jacopo Gallo, promise his very Reverend Lordship that the said Michelangelo shall finish the said work in the space of one year and that it shall be the most beautiful work in marble in Rome, and that no living master shall be able to make one as beautiful." The contract bears date the 26th of August, 1498. Three months earlier, Savonarola









had perished at the stake. Is it rash to suppose that the shade of the martyr hovered over a work undertaken so soon after the catastrophe; that this poignant memory relaxed for a moment the Titan's rigid soul, and inspired a work where Christian resignation harmoniously combined and blended itself with classic serenity? It is a strange thing that the least typical, in certain respects the least Michelangesque of all Buonarroti's productions, is perhaps also the most personal. It is the only one, also, that he ever signed with his name; this is cut upon the Virgin's shoulder-belt.

Without attaining the touching poetry and the stately amplitude of this Mater Dolorosa, the *Madonna* of Bruges, and the two Reliefs of the Bargello and of the National Gallery (the *Virgin and Child* and *S. John*) have such a kinship of sentiment and execution with the *Pietà* that I do not hesitate to bring them together in time and place, and date them also from the latter months of the residence in Rome. These four religious sculptures constitute a distinct group in the work of Buonarroti,<sup>1</sup> and represent, in the history of his art, a phase, short, almost fugitive, which one gladly recognises, and is sometimes conscious, with surprise, of regretting. It is the moment, in fact, when thought and form, with the immortal Florentine, appear in perfect equilibrium; when all is due proportion, harmony, clearness; a moment unique, irrecoverable, that one would gladly arrest in its flight, conjuring it with the

<sup>1</sup> How different from these are the *Christ* of the Santa Maria sopra Minerva (1521), and the *Virgin* in the Mausoleum of the Medici!



cry of Faust: "Stay, do not vanish, thou art so fair!" Vain appeal! it was the destiny of the *Pietà* to be but an incident in the immense labour of this genius — *ostendunt fata!*—and esthetic principles of quite another nature were to be derived by Bertoldo's pupil from the marbles of Rome.

First, he was to gain from them the great teaching that the ancients, the masters — *maestri di color che sanno* — surpassed nature in size, that their plastic, like their scenic, art required its *cothurnus*. These colossal *Horse-Tamers*, this *Apollo*, this *Nile*, and the rest manifestly belonged to a humanity different from our own,—ideal, grander than ours, surpassing, not alone in splendour but also in proportions, the reality which surrounds us, that reality which the naturalists of the Quattrocento had been wont to reproduce with so much candour and diligence. Then, he became aware that to a humanity thus grandly conceived the ancients knew how to give a corresponding life, an intense animation, an overflowing energy, a passionate, dramatic accent. These *Horse-Tamers* make their horses feel all the bridle's force, and impose obedience with angry vehemence; this *Apollo* is all movement and petulance. You seem to hear his arrows vibrate in the quiver, the ἔχλαγξαν of Homer. Lastly, Buonarroti early understood, as I have said, the powerful means of action and expression that was afforded to the ancients by the traditional absence of clothing from their statues: the human body, proudly nude, reflecting and developing in all its members the *motif* of the work and its ruling thought. From the sole of his foot to the coronet of hair surmounting his forehead like a flame, the *Apollo*

is all vibrant with emotion and triumph; from the sole of the foot to the dripping hair and beard, the *Nile* is all fecundity, abundance, vigour. The colossal, the impassioned, the nude,—these are the three great principles which Buonarroti derived from the Roman marbles, and made thenceforth the constituent elements of his own art. Whether he handles the chisel or the brush, whether he borrows his theme from the classic world or from the Christian,—or, it may be, from another world quite new, unknown, which haunts and stimulates him,—everywhere and always, he will henceforth apply these three fundamental principles. He will never be false to them, he will never make them give way; too often, indeed, he will exaggerate them; and then the colossal will come very near being the monstrous,—the impassioned, the grotesque and convulsive; and the exuberance of muscles and plastic forms will serve only to obscure the idea, instead of accentuating it and rendering it more striking.

Take for example the *David*, the first important creation of Michelangelo after his return from Rome in 1501. After Judith, the young conqueror of Goliath was evidently the most popular of Biblical heroes with the Florentines of the fifteenth century; the Bargello has no less than three charming reproductions of this subject—two by Donatello and one by Verocchio; I remember also a delicious little work of Pollajuolo which is one of the gems of the Berlin Museum. That which the old Tuscan masters chiefly saw in a theme like this was the boy, modest and slender, who, by a great miracle of God, emerged victorious from a combat with a formidable giant. He is

a slim, short-clad figure in Verocchio's work, in appearance not unlike a girl; thus Pollajuolo also conceives him. If Donatello represents him nude in one of his two works (the one in bronze), it certainly is not to make a show of his muscular strength; it is to indicate his station, a poor shepherd, frail in body, and protected only by a hat from the burning heat of the sun. The two sculptors as well as the painter have chosen the moment of repose, the moment after the struggle; the lad has his foot upon the giant's head, and seems amazed, almost appalled, at his own victory. How different the *David* of Buonarrotti! To begin with, he is a colossus, and the sculptor sets himself the impossible task of making us accept, as a boy's figure, a statue eighteen feet in height; at sight of such a *bambino* as this, you ask yourself in amazement of what size could his adversary Goliath have been? He is nude from head to foot, obligingly showing the sculptor's anatomical skill, marvellous and incomparable. He frowns, his look is sombre, his lips compressed, his air haughty, aggressive; and here, for the first time, he is represented before the victory, in the passionate moment of the attack. Is this indeed the David of the Bible? The Florentine populace never called him by any other name than *il Gigante*; an ancient writer would doubtless have called him the Athlete, or the Gladiator.

In the *Bacchus* and the *Cupid*, which were executed in Rome for Jacopo Gallo, and are both so oddly original, in the *Adonis* of the Bargello, in the bold design for a S. Matthew in the Academy of Florence, as well as in what we know of the famous cartoon of the *War of Pisa*, for-

ever lost,—we recognise at once the same traits of grandiose conception, inspired by the marbles of Rome; in the project of the tomb for Pope Julius II., in 1505, the tendency is already towards the Titanic. And here we should note an important discovery, made on the 14th of January, 1506, while Michelangelo was working at the mausoleum in his studio near the Vatican, and the Piazza di S. Pietro was strewn with his blocks of Carrara. This discovery was a real event in the world of the Renaissance, and Buonarroti was not a stranger to it.

“I was at that time a boy in Rome,”<sup>1</sup> wrote sixty years later, Francesco da Sangallo, the son of Giuliano, the architect, “when one day it was announced to the Pope that some excellent statues had been dug out of the ground in a *vigna* near the church of Santa Maria Maggiore. The Pope immediately sent a groom to Giuliano da Sangallo to tell him to go directly and see what it was. Michelangelo Buonarroti was often at our house, and at the moment chanced to be there; accordingly my father invited him to accompany us. I rode behind my father on his horse and thus we went over to the place designated. We had scarcely dismounted and glanced at the figures, when my father cried out: ‘It is the Laocoon of which Pliny speaks!’ The labourers immediately began digging to get the statues out; after having looked at them very carefully, we went home to supper, talking all the way, of antiquity.”

Never had any ancient monument produced so much emotion, excited such transports, as this marble group

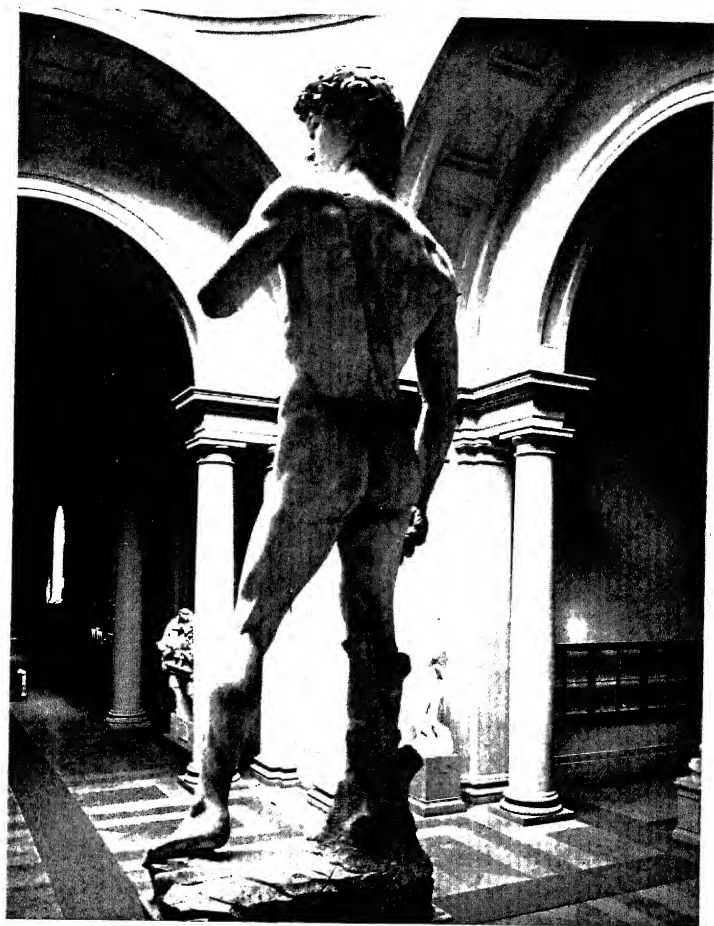
<sup>1</sup> The letter is published by Fea, *Miscellanea*, vol. i., p. 329.

found in the *vigna dei Sette Sale*. "All Rome," wrote immediately Sabadino degli Arienti to Isabella of Mantua,—"all Rome, cardinals and people, hasten by night and day to the *vigna*: it is a like a Jubilee."<sup>1</sup> A tumulary inscription which can still be read in the church of Ara Coeli—in the pavement of the left transept, not far from the chapel of S. Helena—promises "immortality" to Felice de Fredis, the lucky owner of the vineyard, *ob proprias virtutes et repertum Laocohontis divinum simulacrum*. Julius II. hastens to acquire, at the owner's price, the precious find, and to construct for it a special *cappelletta* in the Belvedere. Sadoletto, the great humanist and future cardinal, praised it in Latin verses, which went the world over and were even thought worthy of praise by Lessing. Arriving at the Vatican as a hostage in 1510, Federico di Gonzaga, a boy of twelve, was eager to have a copy of this *opera divina* made for his mother; the conqueror of Marignan, five years later, in his interview with Leo X. at Bologna will prefer to ask frankly for the original itself; and one may imagine the Pope's embarrassment in the presence of a monarch no less powerful than indiscreet. The popularity of Vergil, the precise indications given by Pliny, the pathos of the subject, the grandeur of the conception, and the admirable character of the work all united to captivate men's minds at the sight of this remarkable antique. "The choice of the moment in this composition is without equal in the world; dramatic contrasts here become the most beautiful of

<sup>1</sup>See *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana*, Torino, xi., p. 212.











plastic contrasts; the inequality of the two boys as to age, figure, and power of resistance is marvellously balanced by the terrible diagonal which the figure of the father makes; the group, simply regarded as such, is absolute perfection. If now you pass to detail, and question the wherefore of each *motif*, and the degree in which physical and mental sufferings are blended, veritable depths of artistic knowledge open before you.”<sup>1</sup>

Thus speaks in our own time one of the most competent of judges, and one least inclined to extravagant commendation. Can we wonder, then, that the men of the Renaissance cried out “A prodigy!” and that this work of the three Rhodian sculptors appeared to them an embodiment of all that the ancients have related of the genius of a Pheidias and a Praxiteles? In 1522, during the pontificate of Adrian VI., the Venetian envoys reported from Rome to the Signory that the *Apollo* was thought of no more, all the world being occupied with the *Laocoon*.

The Prodigy,—*il portentoso*:—this was the appellation which Michelangelo gave to the work of Agesandros and his two comrades. He felt a religious respect for this marble; he dared not touch it,—he, who had taken pleasure in restoring many antique statues, did not aspire to replace the missing arm of the Trojan priest. Was it not, indeed, a miracle, this discovery made under his own eyes in the *vigna* of Felice de Fredis—like a providential consecration of all the ideas that he had long before formed for himself of the true conditions of high art?

<sup>1</sup> Burckhardt, *Cicerone*, fifth ed., vol. i., p. 147.

The nude, the colossal, and the impassioned — was it not precisely this lesson that the group of the *Laocoon* taught, with the power and authority of the most sublime of known masterpieces? And, a thing not less marvellous, in the space of a few years, — a little after or a little before the *Laocoon*, — other great antiques, in different degrees appreciated and extolled, — the group of the *Antæus*, the *Torso* of the Belvedere, the *Cleopatra*, the *Tiber*, and the *Nile*, — were successively exhumed from this prolific Roman soil, all bearing the same character and teaching the same lesson! All these marbles seemed to come forth from their tomb that they might testify in favour of the ideal conceived by Buonarroti. To this ideal, which he had half beheld in his *David*, which he had dreamed of in his project of the mausoleum, he was now about to give visible form by a furious labour of five years in the mysterious chapel, — “his cave on Carmel,” as it has so well been called. He was to live there, an Elias, and have none to talk with but prophets and sibyls.

## CHAPTER VII

### A VIEW OF THE RINASCIMENTO

THERE were but few people that afternoon in the Sistine, and I was able, without being too much disturbed, to go over the paintings of the vault at my leisure. Thanks to relations already of long standing with the *custode*, it was permitted me to ascend to the gallery which stretches along the wall under the windows. One is most uncomfortable on this frightfully narrow balcony, and only a part of the immense work can be seen from here; but it can be seen close at hand, in all its splendour and *terribilità*. The height of the position, to which the insipid chatter that goes on below can never ascend; the almost certain solitude (for seldom does tourist encounter the fatigue of the stairs); the play of the sunlight upon layers of dust and cobwebs which form for the apocalyptic figures surrounding one a vaporous atmosphere specked with gold; all this produces an indescribable impression, and does not fail to plunge one into strange reveries. After a time it seemed to me that I was upon the famous "bridge," built here in the month of August, 1508, under Michelangelo's direction, for the beginning of his work. I seemed to be crouching in a corner, panting and scarcely daring to breathe; a few steps distant the great master was transferring his cartoon

to the fresh plaster of a portion of the wall. Suddenly a shade came behind the artist, touching him on the shoulder; it spoke thus:

“ You deceive yourself, Buonarroti, and many men are deceived with you. You take for the supreme expansion, the very apogee of grand art, that which is but its decline, its decadence. Your prodigies of the Belvedere,—the *Laocoon*, the *Torso*, the *Apollo*,—have nothing in common with the golden age of sculpture, that Age of Perikles, of which Poliziano, Bembo, Castiglione, tell you, on the faith of authors known to them. You have before you only the work of *epigonoï*,—of the school of Rhodes or Pergamos,—of the posthumous epoch of the true Hellenic genius. The source of lofty inspirations had been dried up, the divine fire had been long extinct, when this aftermath of an unparalleled harvest sought, by force or by finesse, by passion or by grace, to fill the place of the touching simplicity or the severe beauty that the earlier masters were able to give to their sublime conceptions. Of these earlier masters, Italy has no longer one single original, authentic work. The idea of a Polykleitos or a Praxiteles perhaps survives, and shines out again here and there in some Roman marble representing an athlete, a satyr, or a Venus; but the work itself is of later date, mostly of the period of the Empire; it is a work at second or third hand, a reproduction generally feeble and unskilful, made from the old vanished, inimitable model. All that you see are only copies of perished masterpieces, or even only copies of copies. . . .

“ But grand art is yet visible upon this earth, Buonarroti; the Age of Perikles exists yet, in the most magnificent of all its creations. Eastward there, two days’ distance from the Straits of Messina, on a barren rock scorched by the sun, rises the Parthenon, almost intact, with its metopes, its friezes, its tympana. The Turk is now its careless guardian,—that very Bajazet with whom, in a moment of weakness, you thought to take service;—but only half a century ago, the masters of the Akropolis were Christians, were Italians, even. Half a century ago, a Florentine family, well known to you, and deserving of commemoration,—the Acciaiuoli,—reigned in Athens, and had already had for a hundred years their palace in the Propylaia. The relations between Tuscany and Attika were animated and frequent, the taste for beautiful things was already widespread, the passion for antiquity in all its effervescence; and it will be the wonder of ages to come that none of the numerous visitors to the Akropolis in the time of the Acciaiuoli should have been struck by the incomparable majesty of the Pheidian sculptures, should have made known their presence, and brought the good news home to the Medicean world. Posterity will likewise find it hard to understand how the temples of Pæstum could have escaped the notice of your architects, men admirable for genius and industry; Brunelleschi, Alberti, Sangallo, Bramante. They pore over Vitruvius with ardour; they have measured every fragment of a column, carefully examined every base and every capital that they found lying on Roman ground, without ever suspecting that three superb temples, the noblest examples

of Doric architecture, were within their reach, upon Italian soil, a few miles distant from Salerno. For long years yet to come, these marvels of Poseidonia and of Athens will vainly solicit the notice of your artists, the curiosity of your humanists; and, even, a day will come — a day forever accursed! — when an admiral of Venice will attack the Parthenon, — will destroy the most august monument of the Grand Age: and that immense disaster will occur unnoticed, will arouse no echo of grief, in a century especially *classic*, and proud, as no other has ever been, of its cult for the Greeks and Romans!

“ Your mistake, Buonarroti, is made by all the world, all the brilliant minds who have inaugurated in Italy a return to the classic ideal, an enthusiastic study of those models of harmony and beauty which the ancients left in their works. This enthusiasm has been from the beginning tumultuous and confused; men could not distinguish the diverse merits or the multiform phases of a broad development which had its youth, its maturity, and its decline; and they preferred the productions of the decline, of the Alexandrian or Roman period, because these were more widely diffused, more accessible, easier to understand, easier also to imitate. Thus Vergil, whom your Dante took for his guide, ‘ his author,’ will long be preferred among you to Homer; thus Horace will be preferred to Pindar; thus Seneca, to the great Athenian dramatists. In the arts of design the mistake will be the wider and deeper, because the remaining monuments of the Golden Age will be more rare and difficult of access; and if by chance they are seen, they will obtain no hold upon a











people already fashioned on different models which have deluded them, and have been accepted by them as representing classic tradition *par excellence*, and ideal perfection.

“This illusion is destined to last for centuries; it will overspread the world, and only be dispelled after a long time under the influence of new currents of thought, the rivalries of nations, and of very extraordinary discoveries. A growing interest in popular poetry in different lands, a study of indigenous traditions and legends, will have the result of bringing out very clearly the natural charm, the masterly simplicity, the vernal freshness of the Ionian epic. Impassioned arguments as to the merits of the drama in one country or another, will lead to a critical examination and a supreme appreciation of the tragedies of Aischylos and Sophokles. The vacation trip of an obscure painter in the neighbourhood of Salerno will suddenly reveal the temples of Pæstum and the sublime majesty of Greek architecture. Two little provincial cities buried by the eruption of a volcano will suddenly come forth from their tombs, shaking off their shrouds of ashes and of lava; and the splendour of their bronzes, the grace of their mural paintings, of their jewels, and even of their mere utensils of everyday life, will supply the scale—very reduced, it is true, but very expressive also—of what must have been the grand art of the grand period. Notions long accepted as to the classic ideal will insensibly undergo gradual revision; the distinction will be made between the original and the copy; the Hellenic genius and the Roman genius will each receive its due share in the joint heritage left to the world by antiquity.

“ After this will come a century resembling no other in its ardour of research and its universality of comprehension. This age will study the languages, religions, and arts of all peoples, in their remotest origins, and in their most brilliant developments. The classic ideal it will reconstruct, piece by piece, with its epics, its dramas, its temples, and its world of statues. It will question eagerly the mutilated fragments of Athens and of Olympia, of Pergamon and of Rhodes; it will re-establish the chain of the ages from the marbles of Selinous and Aigina down to the uncouth reliefs of the Constantinian Arch; and it will assign, with marvellous sagacity, to its date and its school each fragment of antiquity. But—eternal irony of mortal things!—this century, so admirable in its broad investigations and its extensive knowledge, will create—will produce—nothing; and its insatiable curiosity even will be the fatal mark of its incurable sterility! Once more poor human nature will renew the experience so often made before, even from the earliest period of the world, that the tree of knowledge is not the tree of life!

“ And, from the height of this vault, after these ages have gone by, you can still, Buonarroti,—like Jehovah Himself, whose incomparable, immortal type you have here created,—you can still look upon your work, and see that it is good; and defy the coming generations to do better, or even to approach it. . . .”

*Signore, si chiuda!* cried the *custode* from below, impatient for his liberty and his *buona mancia*.

## CHAPTER VIII

### A FAMILY SANCTUARY (1505-1508)

A LEAGUE and a half north-east from Rome, beyond the Ponte Nomentano and not far from the place now called *Vigne nuove*, the pedestrian will observe, along the road, remains of walls whose origin seems to date from the time of the Cæsars. Antiquaries entertain the opinion that here was the villa of the freedman Phaon, where Nero took refuge from the outbreak in Rome, and where he, at last, with trembling hand, took his own life,—regretting most of all “the great artist of whom Rome was about to be deprived.” A woman, once his mistress, and, according to some accounts, a Christian, succeeded in concealing the Emperor’s body from the outrages of the populace, in burning it clandestinely, and in transporting the ashes to the not very remote mausoleum of the Domitian family. “The monument can be seen,” says Suetonius, “from the Campus Martius [the Corso] rising on the Hill of Gardens [the Pincio]; the sarcophagus is of porphyry, surmounted by an altar of Luna stone, with a balustrade around it in marble of Thasos. . . .”<sup>1</sup> The tomb of a Nero could not fail, in mediæval Rome, to be haunted by demons; they nested particularly in a walnut-tree which grew near by, and spread terror throughout the region,

<sup>1</sup> Suetonius, *Nero*, 50.

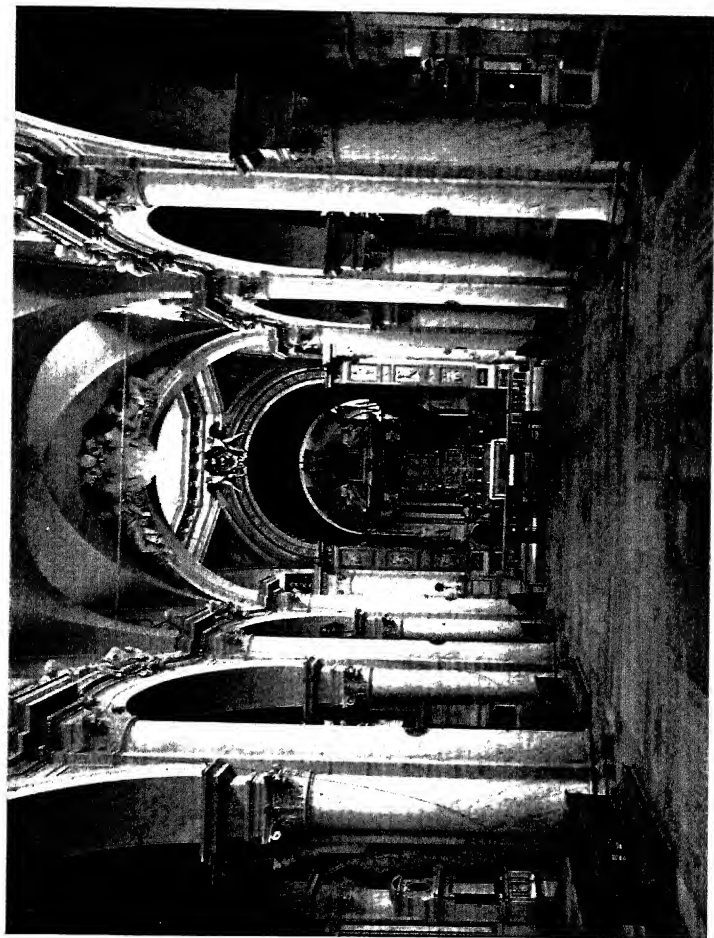
until Pope Paschal II. with his own hands cut down the fatal tree, and ordered the tyrant's ashes to be thrown into the Tiber. The neighbourhood of the Pincio was thus delivered, at the beginning of the twelfth century, from the evil spirits which had so long infested it; and the grateful Romans built on the spot a chapel which took the name of Santa Maria del Popolo.

Situated on the very edge of the city, by no means imposing from antiquity, relics, or traditions,—for nothing was more ordinary in the Middle Ages than a story of the expulsion of demons,—Santa Maria del Popolo only became famous when the Rovere selected it as their favourite and domestic sanctuary. Sixtus IV. was pleased to offer there his devotions, to celebrate there with pomp the important events of his pontificate; Julius II., later, proclaimed under its roof the Holy League; in this church, also, he placed the *Madonna of Loretto*, and his own portrait,—splendid works of Raffaello, now no longer there. It is not easy to account for the choice made by the two Ligurian pontiffs of a little quasi-suburban church, in preference to so many more illustrious—in preference, notably, to San Pietro in Vincoli, of which both were titulars, or the Santi Apostoli, which was almost a part of their family palace (now the Palazzo Colonna). In reviewing the various religious edifices in Rome that the Rovere built, restored, or embellished with so much zeal and liberality, one is surprised also to notice that in this number there is not a single church of the Minorite brethren; there is no trace of their munificence at Ara Cœli, San Francesco a Ripa, or San Pietro in Montorio. Sixtus











IV., however, and Julius II. both began their career as Franciscan monks. They were not very good Franciscans, it must be owned, and the gentle saint of Assisi would scarcely have been able to recognise as his own either the accomplice of the Florentine Pazzi, or the soldier of Mirandola.<sup>1</sup>

It still remains extremely interesting to every studious mind — this church at the foot of the Pincio, which the first della Rovere rebuilt from floor to ceiling (1472-77). No place in Rome better exhibits the art of the closing Quattrocento: architecture, painting, and sculpture are all of remarkable harmony (disturbed only by the opulent Chigi Chapel, and the unlucky additions of Fontana and Bernini), and many portions are an agreeable surprise in their quite unusual preservation. The architecture is sober, almost severe, of a kind very common in Rome towards the close of the fifteenth century, before the arrival of Sangallo and Master Donato da Urbino. The façade is simple, slightly impaired in its upper portion by an ill-judged restoration<sup>2</sup>; the interior, with its three naves, and pilasters flanked by half-columns, appears too low, and does not sufficiently set off the octagonal dome with its solid drum; but this dome, the first of its kind in Rome, is the indication of a dawning taste for centralised buildings, of which S. Peter's was later to be the consummate expression. In the lateral chapels, notably those

<sup>1</sup> I speak of Rome only; it is just to remember that both of the Ligurian Popes showed much solicitude for the Franciscan sanctuaries of Assisi and Loretto.

<sup>2</sup> One of the frescos in the great hall of the hospital San Spirito (painted in the time of Sixtus IV.) shows the original façade.

on the right, the talent of Pinturicchio and his comrades is displayed, graceful and facile, while numerous sepulchral monuments in marble reveal sculptors for the most part unknown, but of superior endowments. On these monuments we read many other names of the della Rovere family,—a Domenico, a Giovanni, a Cristoforo,—and family names of Cibo, Albertoni, Mellino, Pallavicino, Chigi. One is conscious of being in a church to which two powerful Popes have been particularly devoted, and to which, accordingly, the kinsmen and friends of these Popes have added, in their measure, works worthy of the place.

In this sanctuary of family and friendship, Julius II. at the beginning of his reign, conceived the original idea of granting sepulture and a monument to a rival, an enemy, an adversary once formidable, and long eager to destroy him. The Cardinal Ascanio-Maria Sforza was, in 1492, the principal author of the scandalous election of Alexander VI.; he was so from hatred to Giuliano della Rovere, whose accession to the pontificate (not having been able to secure the tiara for himself) he was resolved to prevent at any price. He was Vice-Chancellor of the Holy Church, the Borgia's right hand; and from the hostility of these two men leagued against him, the nephew of Sixtus IV. was forced to seek refuge in a foreign country. Then began for the Rovere a life of exile and struggles, a life of unsuccessful intrigues and agitations, while the star of Cardinal Sforza was always in the ascendant in Italy, thanks especially to a brother's immense fortune,—for his friendly relations with the Borgia had not been lasting. This brother was the infamous

Ludovico il Moro, "the Perikles of Milan," the protector of Bramante and Lionardo da Vinci, the murderer also of his kinsman Galeazzo, and the usurper of the latter's throne; "*homme très saige,*" says Comynes, "*mais fort craintif et souple quand il avoit paour, et homme sans foy, s'il veoit son prouffit pour la rompre.*" He did break faith so often that he ended by ruining himself; a traitor towards all the world, he was in turn betrayed by his Swiss mercenaries; and in his fall he dragged down the Cardinal. The two brothers were carried prisoners into France (1500); but the Vice-Chancellor of the Holy Church suffered a captivity much less rigorous than the dispossessed Duke of Milan; George of Amboise, the powerful Cardinal-Minister of Louis XII., who dreamed all his life of the tiara, thought it wise to deal considerably with this maker of Popes; he even took the Italian with him to Rome to attend the Conclave of 1503, after the death of Alexander VI., in the somewhat *naïf* hope of finding in Cardinal Sforza a useful auxiliary for his own ambitious projects. Welcomed on his return with enthusiasm by the Roman populace, Ascanio naturally thought of nothing but to become Pope himself. This time, again, as in the Conclave of 1492, the Rovere and the Sforza were pitted against each other; this time, also, a third man was elected; but the pontificate of Pius III. lasted only twenty-six days, and finally the nephew of Sixtus IV. ascended the throne of S. Peter. The Cardinal of Amboise proposed to take back with him into France the criminal, his prisoner; but Julius II. peremptorily forbade this; and the Vice-Chancellor was allowed

to remain in Rome, and employ himself in schemes for the recovery of Milan. He died not long after (May 28, 1505), over-fatigued in hunting, at the age of sixty; and the Rovere decided to erect for him a superb mausoleum: "Forgetting disagreements and mindful only of the distinguished virtues of the deceased," says the epitaph.<sup>1</sup> There was pride, no doubt, in such an act, but there was also much generosity, and perhaps even courage: honours like these decreed to a Sforza, proscribed and despoiled by France, not being adapted greatly to please King Louis XII., master of Lombardy, whose susceptibilities the Pope had every reason at this moment to consider.

A mausoleum of a character so exceptional could scarcely have the modest proportions of the other tombs of Santa Maria del Popolo. We are in 1505, and a project for a tomb conceived by Michelangelo had already involved the complete reconstruction of S. Peter's; for the tomb of the Sforza, it was needful to do no more than rebuild one-half of the church which had been erected thirty years earlier by Sixtus IV. Bramante was to enlarge the choir materially; Pinturicchio to paint its vault, William of Marsillat to decorate the windows<sup>2</sup>; and for

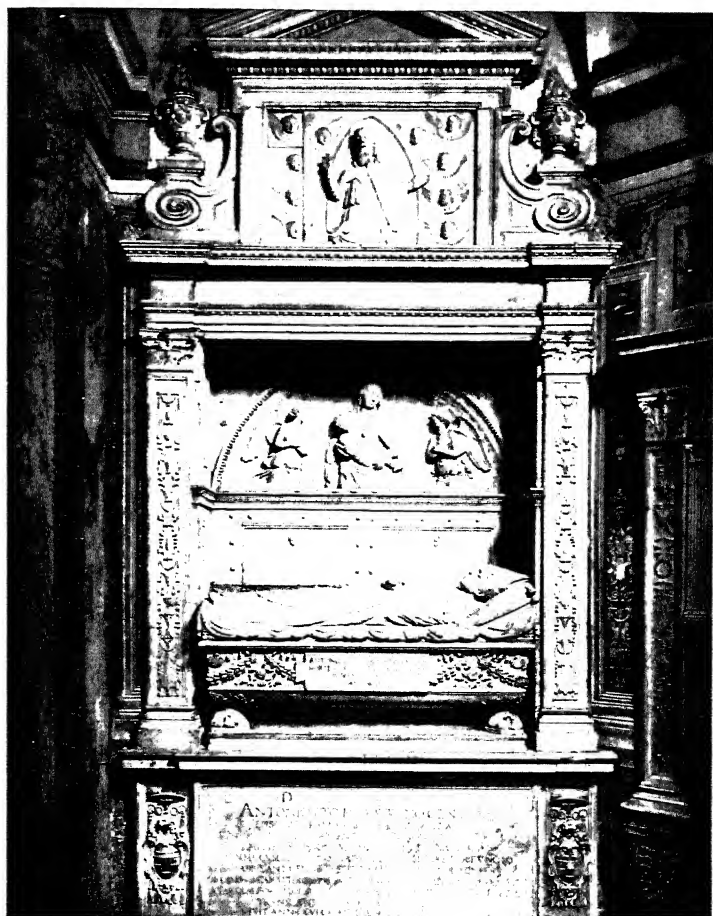
<sup>1</sup> "D. O. M. Ascanio Mariae Sfortiae Vicecomiti. . . . Diacono card. S. R. E. vico cancellario. . . . In secundis rebus moderato, in adversis summo viro . . . Julius II. pontifex maximus, *virtutum memor honestissimarum, contentionum oblitus*, sacello a fundamentis erecto posuit MDV."

<sup>2</sup> The chronology of these reconstructions in the choir of Santa Maria del Popolo is very clearly established by Schmarsow (*Pinturicchio in Rom*, p. 82, seq.); but the date 1505 on the monument indicates only the year of the Cardinal's death; Andrea did not come to Rome till 1506. (See *Vasari*, Ed. Milanese, vol. iv., p. 515.)











the monument itself, it was entrusted to Master Andrea Contucci da Sansovino, a Tuscan artist, hitherto but little known in Italy (he had passed most of his life in Portugal); but whose *Baptism of Christ*, in marble, had lately revealed to Florence the sculptor's rare and precious gifts.

This was, in fact, a remarkable work, and has remained Contucci's masterpiece. Following the example of Michelangelo in the *Pietà*,—and the first to follow him, if I am not mistaken,—Andrea sought inspiration from the antique in representing a Christ nude and beautiful of figure; representing Him also with a pathetic expression of gentleness and contemplation,—the only expression, indeed, whatever may have been said to the contrary, which is fitting in the circumstances. In contrast to the Son of God, the figure of S. John is rendered with all the realistic vigour of the school of Donatello; one might say, even, with the fire of a Jacopo della Quercia. It is indeed the man out of the wilderness, the eater of locusts, with rough hair, inspired gesture, and drapery admirably handled. The contrast is striking, and perfectly justified by the very subject of the composition. A pupil of Antonio Pollajuolo, the extreme naturalist, and also of Bertoldo, the classic initiator of the Medicean Gardens, Andrea Sansovino united, in his group in Florence, with surprising success and perfect equilibrium, the tendencies which divided Tuscan art towards the close of the Quattrocento. This success he was not destined to have in the Roman work; but he gained reputation in Rome; and it is for his sculptures in the choir of Santa Maria del Popolo that he is to-day best known and most admired.

The tomb is constructed after the traditional plan of a monument attached to the wall, having a sarcophagus in the centre placed in a great niche which suggests the *arcosolia* of the catacombs, and is perhaps derived from them; but the *arcosolium* here becomes a lofty triumphal arch, not unlike the Arch of Constantine, or that of Septimius Severus in the Forum. The mausoleum, further, is more imposing in its masses and in its ornament than that of Nicholas V. or of Pius II.; it is divided into many stories and compartments; half-columns are substituted for the earlier and simpler pilasters; columns, architraves, pedestals, and fields are covered with shells, festoons, armorial devices, and a profusion of other ornaments. Very varied and delicate, these ornaments have only the fault that they distract the eye and draw the attention from the figures, which are also far too numerous. On the summit, surmounting its attic, is represented God the Father, seated and blessing, between two angels with flambeaux. In the side compartments stand Prudence, Justice, Faith, and Hope,—figures almost life-size. The Allegories aim at a certain classic distinction, which they attain in some cases; and if their constant *contraposto* appears to us now unduly systematic, it must be remembered that it was a new thing at this period. The principal innovation, however,—destined to be widely copied,—is in the pose which the sculptor gives to the Cardinal's statue: the dead man is represented, not lying at length in the attitude of eternal repose, but leaning on his elbow, bending a little forward as if fallen asleep for a moment. Do not, however, seek some sublime thought in what is really only

a simple technical result from the enhanced proportions of the monument. In truth, as tombs became larger and higher, the figure lying at full length on its bier was to be recognised only with an ever-increasing difficulty, and, in the end, was lost sight of entirely. To obviate this disadvantage, certain sculptors (among others Pollajuolo in the cenotaph of Innocent VIII. in S. Peter's) had already conceived the singular idea of repeating the statue,—one figure lying, as dead, upon the catafalque, the other, as if living, seated on a throne above. Again, in Michelangelo's gigantic scheme, Julius II. was to be held in air by angels, about to place him in his sarcophagus. Con-  
tucci hit upon an expedient much more simple but rather too *naïf*: the figure, lying on one side, supporting the head on the hand, was no longer inconspicuous, as before; but, on the other hand, it had neither the animation of life nor the imposing majesty of death. It is a strange kind of sepulchral monument, which neither saddens nor solemnises the mind of the beholder. This is not the sleep of the righteous, which one contemplates, but a rich man's after-dinner nap: the Virtues and the Allegories are the attendant train of some high personage, present for pomp, not for prayer!

Sansovino had scarcely completed the tomb of Sforza when, early in the year 1507, died Cardinal Girolamo Basso, Bishop of Loretto, one of the exceptional nephews of Sixtus IV. who took the priesthood seriously, and set the example of a devout and saintly life. Julius II. at once gave orders to Andrea for the erection of a monument to his deceased cousin; it was to be the pendant to

Ascanio's tomb, and was, in fact, its literal copy. Rarely has an artist repeated himself so frankly, and taken so little pains to vary his subject. The same observation is forced upon the mind in the presence of another work which competent judges agree in attributing to Contucci; I refer to a small monument in honour of a certain Pietro di Vincenti, in the corridor near the south entrance to the church of Ara Coeli. Whether a preliminary essay,<sup>1</sup> or a later reduction, of the great composition in the choir of Santa Maria del Popolo, it testifies, in either case, to a truly wearisome monotony of invention.

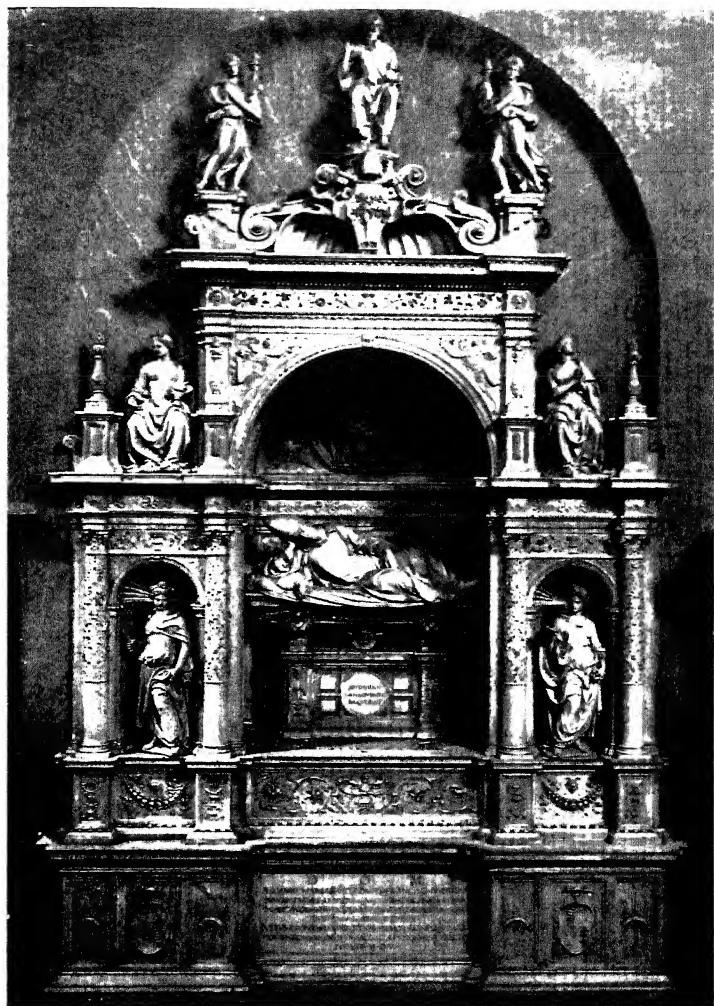
That an artist so destitute of originality and creative power should have been able to excite so much admiration in the contemporaries of Julius II. was due especially to the undoubted elegance and very high distinction of his work, and to his arduous efforts, very often successful, to appropriate certain graceful peculiarities of classic sculpture. We must not forget that Raffaello's magic had not yet begun to take effect in 1506 and 1507; the great enchanter, who would soon call forth Calliope in the fresco of *Parnassus*, and make Galatea smile from the wall of the Chigi Villa, had but just emerged from his Umbrian valleys. Classic art had, up to this time, been studied only in its superficial details by a Donatello, a Mantegna, and a Ghirlandajo, and only half seen, as in a dream of spring, by Botticelli; Michelangelo alone had penetrated the sanctuary itself, but had not deigned to worship there except before the great mysteries and the

<sup>1</sup> Here, as in the monuments of Sforza and Basso, the date (1504) indicates only the year of decease.











great terrors. At this moment, Contucci appeared in Rome with a very acute feeling for the refined and pleasing qualities of antique sculpture and ornamentation, and he delighted the Romans by his constant regard for beauty,—a beauty perhaps a little vague and conventional, but always attractive; and especially he pleased by the studied refinement of a decoration at once luxuriant and delicate. His success was, necessarily, as brief as it was sudden, at least with minds of the higher order. It is noteworthy that after 1507, Sansovino received no further command from the Mæcenæ-Pope, notwithstanding all Bramante's protection, his only other work during the pontificate of Julius II. being done for the German protonotary Coritius in 1512. The famous group of Sant' Agostino (the *Virgin and Child, with S. Anne*) is a rendering in marble of a cartoon by Lionardo da Vinci,—a hybrid work, whose merit, extolled by certain connoisseurs, I willingly confess myself unable to discover.

The two great tombs in the church at the foot of the Pincio, fix, nevertheless, a memorable date and mark an important phase in the history of sepulchral monuments in Rome. Their influence may be traced, notably in the tombs of Pope Adrian VI. in Santa Maria dell' Anima, of Cardinal Michieli in San Marcello al Corso, and of Cardinal Armellini in Santa Maria in Trastevere. This latter Cardinal is even represented as having dropped asleep while reading; the closed book imprisons a finger to keep the place! Most surprising of all, however, is it to be reminded of Contucci as late as the year 1545, and in the presence of Michelangelo's *Moses*.

In that same year of 1545, when Buonarroti, now an old man, for the sake of having done, at last, with what he called "the tragedy of the tomb," had abandoned interest in this great work of his life to the degree that he was willing to have it completed by other hands than his own, the second- and third-rate artists who undertook the task went to seek their inspiration in the choir of Santa Maria del Popolo; and thus it came about that the *pontefice terribile*, who, in the original design, was "to be held by angels" above his sepulchre, appears now, in San Pietro in Vincoli, piteously crouching and drawn up, after the manner of Cardinal Ascanio. But, twenty years earlier,<sup>1</sup> the Titan of the Renaissance had already broken the ancient mould, and inaugurated a new and fatal type. In the Medicean mausoleum, the two *Capitani* are placed by him upon their tombs, seated and alive; they are there before us in all the vigour and animation of their earthly existence; and the example was destined thenceforth to become law. At Santa Maria sopra Minerva, Leo X. and Clement VII. are seated on their pontifical thrones, the Apostle's keys in the left hand, the right hand lifted in benediction; Paul III. Farnese has the same attitude in S. Peter's and, even, he is free from any niche or architectural framework whatsoever. Life has made conquest of death, and there is an end forever of the mediæval conception of a bier and the dead figure

<sup>1</sup> The statue of Duke Giuliano in the mortuary chapel of San Lorenzo was already completed at the beginning of 1526, as appears from the letter to Fattucci, April 26th of that year. *Lettere di Michelangelo*, ed. Milanese, p. 453.

lying upon it, a severe and stately theme which had so long inspired the Pisani, the Cosmati, the admirable Tuscan sculptors of the Quattrocento, and was now embodied for the last time by Andrea Sansovino, but in a manner characterised by excess of emphasis, in the tombs of Sforza and of Girolamo Basso.

Near the close of his life, long after he had created his *Capitani* in the chapel of San Lorenzo, Michelangelo made another essay at a sepulchral monument,—imagining a type entirely original and unique, and with the intention that it should be for his own tomb. It was to be a *Pietà* in pyramidal form, with four figures,—Nicodemus supporting in his arms the dead Christ, lamented over by the Virgin and the Magdalen; and to this Nicodemus, in monkish frock, the octogenarian sculptor gave the well-known, sombre features so early marred by Torrigiano's fist! He worked furiously and in secret at this colossal group,—often by night, a very Cyclops, with a torch fixed above his forehead,—until the moment when, discovering a vein in the huge block of marble, he broke it in pieces and dropped the chisel from his enfeebled hands. The fragments, piously gathered up and reunited by a young friend of the sculptor, Tiberio Calcagni, were finally deposited, in 1722, by order of Cosimo III., in the darkness of Santa Maria del Fiore, behind the high altar; but Vasari had a happier inspiration, in 1564, when it occurred to him to place in Santa Croce the shattered group which contained the great master's last thought, for it was magnificent,—this thought of the dying Prometheus, to be represented after his death, in penitent's frock, clasping

to his heart Christ's Passion, and the grief of the two Marys.<sup>1</sup>

But are you not impressed with the immense and mysterious place that the tomb has never ceased to hold in Christian art, from the twilight of the catacombs up to the high noon of the Renaissance? The crypts of Lucilla and of Calixtus,—the mausoleum of Galla Placidia,—the sepulchral basilica of S. Francis,—the Campo Santo of Pisa,—the *Sagre grotte* of the Vatican,—the cenotaph of Julius II.,—the monuments of Santa Maria del Popolo,—the chapel of the Medici,—the *Pietà* in the Cathedral of Florence,—such might be the titles of chapters in this wondrous history of a sculpture and a painting which have both grown up in the shadow of Death!

<sup>1</sup>It seems to me only right to call attention to the following passage (which has received too little notice) in a letter written by Vasari to Lionardo Buonarroti, March 18, 1564, three weeks after Michelangelo's death (*Carte inedite Michelangiolesche*, Milan, Daelli, 1865, p. 55): "When I reflect that Michelangelo declared, as is well known also to Daniele (da Volterra), Messer Tommaso dei Cavellieri, and many other of his friends, that he intended the *Pietà* with five (four) figures for his own tomb, I think that his heir ought to seek out how it became the property of Bandieri. Moreover, there is in the group an old man who represents the sculptor himself. I beg you therefore to take measures to recover this *Pietà*," etc.

## CHAPTER IX

### “BELVEDERE” (1509)

A SUPERB head, quite bald, except for a few curls near the nape of the neck,—the skull, forehead, eyebrows and eyes of extraordinary power, curiously contrasted with an extreme pettiness of the snub nose, the mouth, and the chin,—like a kind of bald Socrates, much fined down, with all his fund of good-natured wit, and a certain juvenile vivacity added: thus presents himself to our view, in Raffaello's *Disputa*, Master Donato da Urbino, surnamed *il Bramante*; and, in truth, as we look at this charming, impetuous old man, who, leaning against a balustrade, holding in one hand a big open book—is it Vitruvius?—points out with the other a passage to some one standing behind, it is not easy to identify him as that ill-disposed and envious person, that base and perverse plotter, whom Michelangelo never ceased, his life long, to denounce.

This savage rancour against the illustrious builder of S. Peter's is one of the salient and most displeasing traits, it must be confessed, in the character of the great Florentine; it is one of those animosities, inextinguishable, unappeasable, that we find nowhere else than in the strong and violent natures of the Quattrocento. Neither the



rival's death nor his own successes, immense as they were, could disarm a resentment in which the gracious, gentle Raffaello was also destined to have his large share.

In 1542, thirty years after the death of Bramante and twenty-two years after that of Raffaello, Buonarroti ends a long narrative of his "tragedy of the tomb" with these extraordinary lines: "All the difficulties between Pope Julius and myself arose from the jealousy of Bramante and Raffaello. That the tomb was not continued was because they desired my ruin; and Raffaello had good reason for this conduct, since all that he knew of art he derived from me." Observe that Raffaello did not come to Rome until three years after the "difficulties" in question occurred, and until the painter of the Prophets and Sibyls was in the midst of work on his "bridge" in the Sistine! In 1553, Michelangelo, an octogenarian, and at the summit of a fame which has never been equalled, makes use of Condivi, his spokesman, again to hurl against the architect favoured by della Rovere the odious accusation of having sought to make a dishonest profit out of work entrusted to him by a Pope who loaded him with wealth,—of having employed to this end the poorest materials in building, and of having done his utmost to remove him, Buonarroti, from Rome and from the Vatican, lest he should reveal the architect's disgraceful frauds!<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Condivi, c. 20. In a letter written from Rome to Florence, July 9, 1578 (Gotti, vol. ii., p. 57) Sebastiano del Piombo prays Michelangelo to aid him in having Raffaello's peculations brought to light, "who steals at least three ducats daily from the Pope [Leo X.] out of the workmen's wages and out of gildings." Alas!









I find no trace, not the least shadow, of these insulting suspicions in the writings of contemporaries, for instance in the *Journal* of Paris de Grassis, who is not fond of *il Rovinante*, or in the *Storia* of Sigismondo de' Conti, who bitterly deplores the delay (*cunctatio*) in the work of S. Peter's—the delays of a Bramante! I have already spoken of a pamphlet which appeared at Milan, in 1517, against Master Donato, and the reader has been able to judge of its author's keen and caustic mind; but while reproaching the great architect with his frenzy for demolitions and constructions, Andrea da Salerno makes no attempt to blacken his character or throw doubt upon his fidelity. Under a form of badinage he draws a picture of Bramante which lacks neither piquancy nor verisimilitude, and this

alas! and how one blushes for the immortal painter of the Sistine, that he should tolerate such language in his correspondent! As to the "intrigue" set on foot by Raffaello in 1571 to take away from Michelangelo the second half of the *Volta* (see Condivi, c. 32), this is one of the incredible hallucinations of Buonarroti when an old man, to which biographers should never have given credit. These biographers also avail themselves of the well-known letter to Bartolommeo Ammannati, to extol Michelangelo's "generosity which could cast aside the remembrance of cruel persecution (?)." (Heath Wilson, *Life*, p. 478.) In this letter Michelangelo eulogises Bramante's plan for S. Peter's, and avers that "whosoever has departed from this plan (*s'è discostato*), as Sangallo did, has gone aside from true architecture." (*Lettere*, p. 335.) This is the sole and single time that Michelangelo has a good word for Bramante, and here only because of the hatred he bears at this moment for Sangallo (1555). Later, when he had himself become the architect of S. Peter's, Buonarroti goes much farther away from Bramante's plan than did Master Antonio. Three years after this so-called "generosity," he dictated to Condivi the atrocious passage about the thefts committed by the late Master Donato in the use of materials.

is the way Master Donato, asking entrance into Paradise, is made to talk with S. Peter:

"I have never been weary of helping talent, and I have never minded expense in living agreeably. Why did the ancients give a round shape to coins except that they should roll more easily? . . . I have banished from myself as far as possible all melancholy, and I have tried to feed my soul on gaiety and pleasure. Did not God give to man that which you call free will? Man, then is free to live freely! He is forbidden to kill, to steal, to do injury to his neighbour; but beyond that let him eat, drink and amuse himself, and if he has good sense, let him enjoy the blessed indolence of Epicurus. . . ."

Epicurean he perhaps was, but certainly not indolent, and in him the joy of living was always ennobled by a great generosity and a true high-mindedness. "A patient son of poverty,"—as his pupil Cesare Cesariano calls him in pretty phrase,<sup>1</sup>—he knew both how to enjoy the goods of this world, and, at need, how to do without them. I want no better proof of this than his resolution, when first he came to Rome, to seek for a time no employment, but to live frugally on his little Lombard savings that he might have full leisure to study the monuments of the Eternal City. We need not insist upon the seriousness of vocation of a master who, old and infirm, kept on working to the latest day of his life with all the ardour of youth; what one must admire is that this earnestness never excited his pride or altered in any way his constant good humour. Friendly and helpful to all talent, with-

<sup>1</sup> *Fu paziente filio di paupertate*, Cesariano, *Vitruvio*, p. 75.

out being himself of any special school or province,<sup>1</sup> he was all things to all men: assisting Sansovino in the setting of the two tombs, designing the architectural portions of Raffaello's School of Athens, constructing the scaffolding for Michelangelo's work in the Sistina; it is true the latter found this scaffolding execrable, discovered in it some infernal machinations, and got rid of it promptly. Bramante loved good company, good cheer, gay conversation, and even took pleasure in jokes and riddles; but it was from this very animation and this strong vitality that he derived the extraordinary energy required for a marvelous transformation, a rare palingenesis,—perhaps unique in the history of men of genius.

He had passed the best of his life in Milan, at the Court of Ludovico il Moro, as engineer, architect, and even, on occasion, painter. In these Lombard plains, the vicinity of the North exercised an influence unknown in other parts of the peninsula; the transalpine Gothic, in all its freedom, with its capricious profiles and projections and its diversity of combinations, united with the old Roman stock in architectural constructions often grotesque and unreasonable, but sometimes also attractive from their very peculiarity. Lombardy had no quarries either of marble or of travertine; hence she must have recourse to brick and terra-cotta; and these materials, yielding and easily managed, were a temptation the more to trifle with technical difficulties and to despise certain of the fundamental

<sup>1</sup> He assisted the Tuscans in Rome, for instance Contucci and Signorelli; the Lombards, as Caradosso; but I regard it as a mistake to consider him as the chief of an Urbinate faction.



laws of architecture. Master Donato had availed himself of all these conditions, good or otherwise, of all these merits and these defects, to produce an art original, animated, and graceful, which had its grandeur, which had its reason for being, and long preserved in those countries its justly honoured name of Bramantesque. Light, airy galleries surrounding slender cupolas; stories retreating, one behind another; capitals with volutes of dolphins, hippocamps, sphinxes, children with cornucopias; columns covered to half their height with broad acanthus leaves; polychromy, picture-like and illusive effects,—such are the unusual, irregular, but fascinating traits, which strike you in Santa Maria presso San Satiro, in the cloister of Sant' Ambrogio, and in the church of Abbiategrasso. For twenty-five years Bramante had thus pursued in triumph his Lombard career, scattering here and there his buildings, graceful, elegant, light, whimsical; creating a numerous school of remarkable followers—among whom we need only name the men to whom is due the façade of the Certosa at Pavia—and seeing his style extend along the valley of the Po as far as Parma, as far as Bologna; when, suddenly, the catastrophe of Ludovico il Moro (September, 1499) scattered to all the four winds the exceptional artists whom the Sforza had gathered at his Court in Milan. Lionardo da Vinci found employment with the atrocious Cesare Borgia; Master Donato da Urbino went to seek his fortune in Rome.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In many recent works there is mention of a short expedition to Rome made by Bramante in the year 1493. This supposed visit has been attributed to him in order to declare him the builder, or

The classical ruins of the Eternal City at once produced upon his mind a supremely powerful, a dominant impression. He made no attempt to obtain lucrative orders, but lived poorly, consecrating his entire self to a profound study of these noble vestiges of a great and vanished world. Absorbed in thought and in solitude,—*solo e cogitativo*, says Vasari,—for two years he wandered in Rome, stopping before every broken arch, before every dilapidated and yawning vault, measuring columns, pilasters, walls. He pursued his investigations in the Campagna, at Hadrian's Villa and the little temples of Tivoli, and even went as far as Naples; one step farther, and Pæstum might perhaps have revealed to him its mysterious treasures! He failed of that supreme good fortune, but he understood enough of this antiquity so ardently pursued and he was sufficiently captivated by it, to break at once with his Lombard manner, and enter upon a style entirely opposite—the grand style of the high Renaissance, the style which from that time to the present day has not ceased to dominate modern architecture. And this immense revolution in his whole art, in his whole being, Bramante undertook at the age of fifty-six, having a long and famous past behind him, and before him, only two

at least the designer, of the Cancellaria, which bears on its façade the date 1494 (and once bore the still earlier date, 1489). Signor D. Gnoli, *Archivio storico dell'Arte* (Rome, 1892), has lately demonstrated by unanswerable arguments that the Cancellaria is not (any more than the Palazzo Giraud in the Borgo Nuovo) the work of Bramante, who was never in Rome till after the fall of Sforza. In thus setting right the question as to the Cancellaria, Signor Gnoli has done great service to the history of art.

lustres of the new life! The *vita nuova* of Master Donato—like that of Dante, two hundred years earlier—had for its date, we note in passing, a Jubilee year—this one, the Jubilee of 1500.

The easy, winged inspiration of the preceding period, with its leaning towards the picturesque and the fantastic, with its over-refinement of sculptural ornamentation and of dainty details, will henceforth give place, in the work of the Urbinate, to a principal care for the effect of masses, for a beauty of proportions and for a harmony in the entire construction;—it is, if I may so express myself, the impersonal sway of law and of unchangeable rules (*le quadrature*), substituted for the subjective reign of grace and fancy. We must bear in mind what there was of arbitrary and accidental even with Brunelleschi and Alberti in what they borrowed from antiquity for their capitals and attics, their volutes and arches; but with Master Donato a rigorous organic idea was to preside over the choice, quite as much as in the distribution, of the various constructive elements. The Roman temples gave him models for isolated columns, while the Theatre of Marcellus, with its system of superposed engaged columns, the pilasters of the Pantheon, and the walls and niches of the Thermæ, were his guide as to the casing of the walls and supports and the elevations of the arcades and *loggie*. And still, not so exclusively devoted to the antique formula as to be enslaved by it, he had no hesitation in giving the rustic Tuscan to the Cyclopean basement of San Biagio, or to the ground floor of a private palace; and from his Lombard past he ever retained a

predilection for tall cupolas, spherical extremities, and projecting pilasters. Above all, he was never to lose his exquisite sense of elegance and distinction, and he will remain always the incomparable *profilatore* of the age. He refined the massive Roman style of the Empire, without causing it to lose its majesty and power; unlike Michelangelo, he united grace with strength, a devotion to beauty with the exigencies of the colossal; and architecture was always for him a harmony,—“ a music,” according to Alberti’s celebrated expression.

Bramante’s first creation in Rome was (1502) the Tempietto, the little circular edifice of two stories and a cupola,<sup>1</sup> which stands in the court of San Pietro in Montorio, on the spot where, according to one legend, the Prince of the Apostles suffered martyrdom. A small edifice, but a great event: “ After an interruption of twelve centuries,” says Burckhardt, “ this is the first new monument built entirely in the antique spirit.” The architects of the Renaissance were never weary of studying it and drawing it as the type of what they called *il buon stile*; and to this day, for every enlightened visitor to the Janiculum, it has a penetrating charm. The magnificence of the site adds to the attraction of the monument: a few steps distant is that admirable view over the city, the Campagna, and the mountains which Martial describes in delicious lines.<sup>1</sup> There is nothing more curious and more instructive than the resolute sobriety, almost aridity,

<sup>1</sup> The crown of the cupola is not Bramante’s; he had designed it much higher and more slender, like a candelabrum.

<sup>1</sup> *Epigrammata*, vol. iv., p. 64.

that characterises this initial work of Bramante's second manner. The two graceful rounded temples at Rome and at Tivoli (San Stefano delle Carozze and the "Sibyl") evidently suggested the Tempietto, but even these antique models the architect felt obliged to correct, in the interest of a still greater simplicity, eliminating from them every superfluous detail of moulding and ornament. For the luxuriant Corinthian columns of the two classic buildings he has substituted the severe Doric order, and, with the exception of rosettes in the ceiling of the colonnade, he has abstained rigorously—and as if in penitence for a past too flowery and flamboyant—from the slightest *motif* of foliage or vegetation.

For this voluntary (and even excessive) sacrifice of all sculptural ornamentation he, however, amply compensates himself by something entirely new,—an effect of perspective equally original and striking. A continuous succession of recesses, alternately semicircular and rectangular, made in the exterior wall of the *cella* in its two stories, creates—together with its ring of columns—for the Janiculan monument an atmosphere of light and shade which we seek in vain in the ancient *monoptera* which were its type. In Bramante's plan, which, unfortunately, was never fully carried out, a broad circular portico was to surround the Tempietto, and in each of the four corners of the courtyard was to be built a chapel with a curved niche. The circular principle would thus have been repeated and re-echoed from point to point, and with great variety of effect, in the building as a whole, in the exterior colonnade, in the great portico, in the cupola, in

the niches of the *cella*, and in the chapels in the corners of the courtyard.

One cannot study too carefully the scope and originality of this ingenious combination of columns and surfaces and of skilfully alternated niches<sup>1</sup>; it gives to the entire building that life and animation which flutings give to the single column; here the whole edifice seems fluted, so to speak, catching a varied light in its parts and profiles. Applied to the *interior* of a building, as here to the exterior, and executed upon a gigantic scale, this rhythmic system of supports and niches was to become, later, the great conception of S. Peter's.<sup>2</sup>

The art of Master Donato is like that marvellous object in the Oriental legend which, folded up, is a fan in a girl's hand, and, unfolded, can shelter all the army of the Padishah! The little chapel of the Janiculum and the colossal Basilica of the Vatican—a toy in masonry, and a cosmos in marble and travertine—both proceed from one and the same constructive idea, an idea of genius.

The portico of the cloister of Santa Maria della Pace, which Bramante undertook shortly after the Tempietto, also marks a memorable date in the history of the high Renaissance. Very inconspicuous, and, indeed, quite negligently ordered in details, this work nevertheless

<sup>1</sup>The niches (even the exterior ones) were all destined to receive statues, as is already indicated in the round temple of Raffaello's *arazzo*: *Saint Paul before the Areopagus*. Here Raffaello copied the Tempietto, as he copied in the *School of Athens* and in the *Punishment of Heliodorus* the (projected) interior of the new S. Peter's.

<sup>2</sup>Of S. Peter's as Bramante projected it.

inaugurates a complete revolution in the method of conceiving open structures. The peristyle of the Pace entirely surrounds the square courtyard; it has two stories, the lower with groined vaulting, the upper with horizontal wooden roof; and this disposition skilfully indicates its character,—half-religious, half-domestic. The lower story has massive piers on which rest round arches; Ionic pilasters, applied to these piers rise beyond them, springing straight to the architrave above the arcade, thus adding to the impression of solidity given by the lower story. The gallery above has projecting composite piers and, with its wooden cornice, is like a covered balcony, while the slender Corinthian colonnettes, placed in the intervals between the piers seem like mullions in twin windows. We have here the foreshadowing of the court of San Damaso.

A monumental inscription, occupying the entire architrave of the portico of the Pace, informs us that Cardinal Oliviero Caraffa built the monastery in 1504, and presented it to the canons of the Lateran. This Cardinal Caraffa, whose name is so oddly mixed up with the statue and the origins of *Pasquino*,<sup>1</sup> is one of the attractive figures of the Sacred College at the close of the fifteenth century. A member of the powerful Neapolitan family of the Maddaloni, he was at once jurist, theologian, and amateur of antiquities; a churchman, a statesman, and a warrior,

<sup>1</sup>The statue of *Pasquino*, now at the corner of the Palazzo Braschi, was formerly in the Piazza Navona, near the dwelling of Caraffa, where the base, with the inscription *Oliverii Caraffa beneficio hic sum MDI.*, may be seen to this day. Cardinal Oliviero presided over the early *festas* of *Pasquino*, which in their origin (as Signor Gnoli has lately demonstrated in a very interesting











—even, at need, an admiral! Invested in his purple, he commanded the papal fleet in 1472, and made war upon Mahomet II., the conqueror of Constantinople. It cannot exactly be said that here he covered himself with glory; he had, however, his triumphal entry into the Eternal City, followed by twenty-five Turkish prisoners mounted on camels,—an entirely new spectacle, which gave the Romans great delight. Much more serious are the claims of the enterprising prelate as a Mæcenas. He built the Caraffa Chapel in Santa Maria sopra Minerva, and adorned it with frescos by Filippino Lippi in honour of S. Thomas Aquinas, his compatriot; in one of these paintings, unfortunately retouched, the Angelic Doctor recommends Cardinal Oliviero to the Madonna. He had also the excellent idea of encouraging Bramante in the latter's beginnings at Rome. It was he, probably, who procured for the Urbinate the order for the Tempietto, San Pietro in Montorio being a foundation of their Catholic Majesties, who were at this time closely connected with Neapolitan affairs; for himself, he entrusted to Bramante the cloister of the Pace. But Master Donato was permitted to finish neither of these two works, for the pontiff who had just then ascended the throne left him no leisure.

Of all the artistic passions of Julius II., the passion for building was the earliest and the strongest: *magnarum*

paper), were peaceful contests by humanists, poets, and rhetoricians. It is well known that this statue once made part of a group representing Ajax with the body of Achilles, a magnificent Greek work, now horribly disfigured. Michelangelo placed the *Pasquino* in the highest rank of ancient statuary known to us, and Bernini declared it the finest marble in Rome.

*molium semper avidus*, a contemporary said of him. He had been the soul of most of the monumental creations which were the pride of the pontificate of Sixtus IV., his uncle; and he had already, as Cardinal, attached his name to the two churches of San Pietro in Vincoli, and the Santi Apostoli, with their respective palaces; as well as to the Basilica of Sant' Agnese *fuori*, and many another edifice in Rome or its environs, enlarged and embellished by his care. The very personal *cachet* of the man I find especially in the curious monastery of Grotta Ferrata,—a monastery, but, first and chiefly, a formidable citadel, with moats, bastions, and drawbridges: the visitor at Frascati will not soon forget that singular edifice whose crenelated walls dominate the elms and plane trees of the smiling Tusculan hillside. Quite different is the desolate and arid aspect of Ostia in the midst of sandy plains, with here and there a melancholy pine tree on the horizon. There, also, on the principal tower of a fortress, one reads the words: "Giuliano of Savona, Cardinal of Ostia, built this edifice,—for refuge against the perils of the sea,—for the protection of the Roman Campagna,—for the security of this place, and for a defence of the mouths of the Tiber,—in the year of grace 1489, and the year 2129 of Ancus, the founder of the city." When the days of danger and of exile came, and the nephew of Sixtus IV. was obliged to seek shelter in France from the Borgian persecutions, he still gratified his taste for building; and in default of Rome, for the moment closed against him, he remembered his native city in Liguria and ordered Sangallo to build him in Savona a fine palace.

Giuliano Giamberti, of Tuscan origin, and the founder of a whole dynasty of architects of the name Sangallo, was, during the period of which I have been speaking, the Cardinal's favourite architect, and was even with him for a time in his exile in France. In Rome he resumed his position with his patron as soon as the latter had assumed the tiara, and the architect's influence appeared to be permanently established, especially when, at his recommendation, Michelangelo was attached to the Vatican.<sup>1</sup> The architect of the Tempietto, however, at once became a dangerous rival; he gained an advantage over the Florentine in the matter of the plans for the new S. Peter's, and from that moment his ascendancy constantly increased. Notwithstanding his sincere attachment to Sangallo, Julius II. was not the man to sacrifice to him all these *magnæ molæ*, of which the genius of Bramante opened to him at this moment the radiant vision: between the Rovere and *il Rovinante* there was a foreordained harmony.

What a spectacle it was, then!—these two old men, these two valetudinarians,—in less than ten years both will be dead, —laying out the programme for S. Peter's, San Biagio, and the Belvedere, all at the same time! And how this programme sums up in itself the ruling ideas, the sovereign tendencies of the period! For while the new Basilica is to be “the most beautiful and magnificent” in Christendom,—“to surpass even the famous temple that the Greeks built to their Diana of Ephesus,” as Canon Albertini says, a little later, in his *Mirabilia*;

<sup>1</sup>This is related by Francesco, the son of Giuliano, in his letter on the discovery of the *Laocoon*

while San Biagio (in the Via Giulia, along the bank of the Tiber) is intended to concentrate within its walls all the public offices of the Eternal City, and to be, *par excellence*, the *Palazzo governativo*—the Belvedere, for its part, with the enchanting *vedute* that so well justify its name; with its incomparable collection of antique statues; with its *loggie* to be decorated by the most famous painters of the age; with its theatre in the open air, for shows, fêtes, tournaments, is destined to unite in its vast circuit all that can delight the eye of man. Observe,—religion, power, and pleasure,—have we not here the *credo* and symbol of the *Rinascimento*?

For each one of these gigantic constructions Bramante conceives a different and original design. In his plan for the Basilica, he proposes to substitute for the hitherto dominant principle of the rectangle—the edifice with a long nave—the principle, almost new (considering the grandeur of the proportions and the strictness of the applications) of the circle—the edifice with a central dome. San Biagio, on the contrary, shall be a rectangular building, with a ground floor in heavy rusticated masonry like the Pitti Palace and two stories of engaged columns; four rusticated towers to occupy the angles; a fifth, higher than the others, is to surmount the main entrance.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The plan of San Biagio is preserved in the Uffizi in Florence. Its façade was to measure 320 feet, a third longer than the Farnese Palace, which was built in imitation of it. San Biagio, as is well known, was never finished. Remains of its foundation walls (in enormous rough blocks) may still be seen along the Via Giulia in the lower story of houses for a distance of over 250 feet, from the Vicolo del Cefalo to the Via del Gonfalone.

For the Belvedere and the galleries connecting it with the Vatican Palace the artist exhausted all the combinations suggested to him by the colossal ruins of the ancient city,—the Theatre of Marcellus, the Colosseum, the Thermæ. For eight years (1505–12), the old Urbinate carried simultaneously these three enormous tasks, to which the Rovere continued incessantly to add new ones, namely, the choir of Santa Maria del Popolo, the staircase of the Palazzo Communale at Bologna, the harbour at Civita Vecchia, the Palazzo Apostolico of Loretto, and others. For eight years Bramante is constantly in the breach in Rome, or travelling upon the highroads of the Pontifical States: military engineer, inspector of works, superintendent of arts, architect,—he moves mountains of stone and earth, pulls down and builds up, wherever he goes.

*Diruit, ædificat, mutat quadrata rotundis.*

But he never moves quickly enough to content his formidable Mæcenas; at last he has to make his workmen labour night and day, at night by light of torches.<sup>1</sup> This

<sup>1</sup> The despatches of the Modenese envoy at Rome (Pastor, *Päpste*, vol. iii., pp. 717 and 864) give an animated picture of the ardour of Julius II. in the construction of S. Peter's, in 1507, on his return from the “crusade” of Perugia and Bologna. Costabili writes (April 7th): “*La Santità del papa se demonstra tuto alegra e spesso va su la fabrica de la chiesa de San Pietro dimostrando presente non haver altra cura maggiore che da finire la detta fabrica.*” Five days later Costabili writes again: “The Pope went to-day to visit the church of S. Peter and inspect the work. I was there also. The Pope had Bramante with him, and he said to me, smiling, ‘Bramante tells me that twenty-five hundred men are at work here; one might review them. It is an army.’”



feverish haste will have unfortunate results; there will be cracks and fissures in his buildings, and later Michelangelo will make them the occasion for unworthy calumnies of the memory of the detested Urbinate. Let it be said, too, that the architects of the high Renaissance in general did not concern themselves beyond measure, nor, indeed, as much as they ought, with the solidity of the constructions whose plans they made on paper, leaving to their subordinates the responsibility of the execution. Their great theorician, Leo Battista Alberti, even goes so far as to say that it is beneath the dignity of the artist-architect himself to labour at the material realisation of his ideas. Master Donato, in this respect, perhaps left too much to his assistant, Giuliano Leno. The work of Bramante—and his fame as well—suffered much from all these very untoward circumstances, but to them Julius II. owed the sight of at least one of these great monumental constructions considerably advanced during his lifetime. The *Opusculum de mirabilibus novæ et veteris urbis Romæ*, dated in the middle of 1509, makes mention of the Belvedere, rebuilt with great splendour, and of the antique statues collected in its *viridarium*. The same year Erasmus of Rotterdam gives (to Corsi) the description of a bull-fight at which he had lately been present in one of the courtyards of the Vatican.

The Vatican at that time presented (as it does at the present day) an agglomeration of edifices constructed at different periods, without any care for regularity or homogeneity. What Bramante thought to do for the façade of the pontifical palace on the side towards the Piazza di San

Pietro can only be conjectured from that part of the Court of San Damaso on which he has left the stamp of his genius,—those *loggie*, namely, ravishing in their lightness and elegance, notwithstanding the coarse glass framework which now defaces them.<sup>1</sup> Master Donato's objective point, however, in his labours at the Vatican was a small pavilion (*belvedere*) long ago erected by Pope Nicholas V., northward from the pontifical palace, towards the higher ground, and rebuilt in 1490 by Innocent VIII., who had caused it to be adorned with frescos by Mantegna and Pinturicchio.<sup>2</sup> Bramante united this pavilion to the pontifical residence, by taking in all the sloping valley (1000 feet long by 240 wide) which separated the one from the other.<sup>3</sup> He divided this valley into two *cortili*, of which the higher one formed a garden (the present *giardino della pigna*); the lower and more sloping *cortile*, into which the descent from the upper terrace was made by a broad flight of steps, had rows of seats to accommodate an audience, and ended at the south in a hemicycle, the *teatro*: here were to be tourneys, jousts,

<sup>1</sup> It protects—the excuse is made—the paintings of Raffaello, Giovanni da Udine, and the others; but surely the panes of glass need not be so small and so offensive to the eye.

<sup>2</sup> Traces of these frescos are still visible in the former chapel of the pavilion, now the Sala dei Busti.

<sup>3</sup> In the court of the Belvedere, opposite Paul V.'s fountain, there is a door in rustic work which opens into the Prati di Castello. Above this door, on the outside, we read in colossal and very handsome letters: *Julius II. Pont. Max. Ligurum VI. Patria Savonensis Sixti IIII. nepos Viam hanc struxit Pont. commoditati*. It is surprising that this inscription is not found in the current works upon the Vatican. Platina enumerates five Ligurian Popes before Julius II.; hence the *Ligurum VI*.

bull-fights, and other like *divertimenti*. However strange at the present time may appear such an addition to the dwelling of the Successor of S. Peter, it is fair to remember that this did not at all offend the Christian world of that day: Nicholas V. had already thought of it fifty years earlier; as late as Sixtus V., mention is still made of games and tourneys in the Belvedere.<sup>1</sup> Continuous arcades, at first three stories high, then diminishing to one story, and leading directly to the pontifical apartments, border the Court of Tournaments and the Garden on the east and west sides;—the Colosseum and the Theatre of Marcellus with their three orders of superposed pilasters served here, as in the *loggie*, for models in the construction of the arcades; on the north, the architect sought inspiration from the Thermæ,—a colossal apse, eighty-two feet high (*il Nicchione*), at the very top of the slope, shut in the interior. “Rome,” says Vasari, “had never seen, since the ancient days, a conception so admirable.”

Of this conception, nothing now remains except the *Nicchione* itself: the Court of Tourneys has disappeared under the later constructions of the *Biblioteca* and the *Braccio nuovo*; the arcades have been built up (here and there, their graceful outlines are still visible in the walls); and the bare, cold, monotonous corridors of the

<sup>1</sup> See, among others, the two engravings preserved in the Corsini Library, representing one of these tourneys in the reign of Pius IV. One has the monogram H. C. B., and gives the view from the Court of San Damaso; the other, without monogram and by a different engraver, is still more interesting: the three stories of the arcades are seen, crowded with spectators. Cf. also Letarouilly, *Le Vatican*, tables 5 and 8.

Museo Lapidario and the Chiaramonti have replaced the splendid halls with their broad luminous bays which were called, in the Rovere's time, the Porticus Julia.

Only from some rare sixteenth-century prints can one have an idea of Bramante's conception. Or if, on a bright morning, from the south-eastern height of the Palatine, where the Stadium lies at your right, and the hideous gasometer of the Circus Maximus at your left, you bring your opera-glass to bear upon the walls of the Vatican, flooded with sunshine, you will perhaps have something better than any engraving. You will be able to look down into the whole inner space of the pontifical palace, from the Court of San Damaso to Bramante's gigantic apse; you can easily imagine that the buildings at right angles are not there,—namely, the Library and the *Braccio nuovo*,—and your eye can measure that length of nearly a thousand feet of Bramante's two lateral galleries. The *Nicchione*, also, which loses all its effect as seen in the *giardino della pigna*, because the other half of the great space is now filled up, will appear, with an elevation and dignity of which you never dreamed: at its right is the dome of S. Peter's, and the great apse does not suffer from a neighbourhood like that.

Like the Julian Portico, the Belvedere now shows but one vestige of all Bramante's work here, the famous winding staircase which, from the Hall of Meleager, descends in a spiral to the ground close to the exterior wall of the Vatican. Constructed with a broad, gentle incline, it permitted the Pope and his guests to ascend on horse-

back, unfatigued, to the upper floor of the Belvedere.<sup>1</sup> Contemporaries make mention of many magnificent halls in the interior of the pavilion, of "a place designed for the Conclave," and so on; but all this was as nought compared with the *Viridarium*, at whose entrance, on the side of the vestibule were the words: *Procul este profani!* This was indeed peculiarly the sanctuary; it must be approached with reverence; it had its chapels (*capellette*), I was about to say, its divinities. In the midst of flowering shrubs, of orange-trees, pomegranates, and laurels, the air cooled by a sparkling fountain, were collected the finest antiques that had been discovered up to that time. There were to be seen, placed in the chapels, or only under the shadow of the trees,—the *Apollon*, the *Laocoon*, the *Cleopatra* (which is the *Ariadne*), the *Hercules with the Child* (thus well designated at first; later named by

<sup>1</sup> Albertini speaks of many *faciles ascensus* in the Vatican, *ut ad summitatem usque tecti possit equitari*, as well as in the Belvedere, *adeo quod equester per latum et altum parietem tripliciter ab uno palatio ad aliud pervenitur*. Bramante seems to have had a predilection for ascents of this kind. His magnificent staircase in the palace in Bologna belongs to the same category. It is perhaps not inappropriate to recall here the passage already quoted from the pamphlet *Simia*, where Master Donato expresses a wish to construct a stairway to Heaven, "so broad and easy that feeble old souls can go up on horseback." Vasari (ed. Milanese, vol. i., p. 299, and vol. iv., p. 158) says that Bramante derived his idea from the staircase constructed by Niccolò Pisano in the campanile of San Nicolò in Pisa. In a letter of Jan. 18, 1531 (Gotti, *Vita*, vol. ii., p. 75), one of the employees in the Belvedere, Benvenuto della Volpaia, writes to Michelangelo, at that time in Florence, to come to his lodging, on arriving in Rome: "You can even," he says, "enter without passing through the city, by the door which opens upon the winding staircase."

pedants *Commodus*); the *Antæus* also, so highly esteemed by Michelangelo (now in the court of the Pitti Palace in Florence); and the *Tiber*, which, since the First Empire, adorns the Louvre. Some of these works, be it remembered, were destined to remain for centuries to come the supreme masterpieces of ancient sculpture. Winckelmann and Goethe will know nothing superior to them; they will reign unrivalled in the kingdom of absolute beauty until the advent of the Elgin marbles and the *Venus of Melos*. There was also a Venus in this sanctuary, a *Venus Felix*, much extolled,—even called the Venus of the Belvedere, like the *Apollo*; but this very commonplace statue deserved neither that excess of enthusiasm nor even the honour of a place here at all. Vases, sarcophagi (one with Barbarian Prisoners, the other with Amazons), masks (to the number of thirteen, said to have been brought from the Pantheon), completed the decoration of Julius II.’s *Viridarium*<sup>1</sup> where Buonarroti and

<sup>1</sup> With the exception of the *Antæus* and the *Tiber*, all the marbles here enumerated are now in the Vatican: the *Venus Felix* and the two sarcophagi, in the Cortile of the Belvedere (Nos. 39, 42, and 69); the *Hercules and Child* (Telephos) in the Chiaramonti Gallery (xxvi., 636); the masks, part of them still in the Cortile, the rest in the Hall of Animals and the Hall of Meleager. The *Cleopatra* (*Ariadne*) and the *Tiber* did not appear in the *Viridarium* before 1511 and 1512, but this was still in the time of Julius II. The *Tiber* is evidently the pendant of the *Nile*, and the two were found in the same part of the city (near Santa Maria sopra Minerva); it seems doubtful, however, whether the *Nile* was removed during the pontificate of Julius II. from the place where its discoverer reburied it in the time of Poggio,—which is singular, because Albertini knew of it and quotes Poggio’s account. To reconstruct Julius II.’s *Viridarium* we may consult Albertini, a contemporary, and the letters of the Mantuan envoys to Elisabeth

Raffaello doubtless spent many an hour in study and meditation.

In my frequent visits to the Vatican Museum, I take pleasure sometimes in representing to myself the Belvedere as Bramante arranged it for the pontiff-patron. I see Julius II. enter by the door from the winding staircase, leaning with one hand on his crutch, with the other on the shoulder of his favourite architect and director of fine arts. He stops a moment in the *vestibolo rotondo*, to enjoy from the balcony the incomparable view over the city, the Castle of Sant' Angelo, the Sabine Mountains, and the great hollow of Præneste. In the *Viridarium* he long contemplates the *Apollon* and the *Laocoon*, to which his name will for ever remain attached, and he compliments the old Urbinate upon the perfect arrangement of the two *capellette*. From this Museum, at that time unique in the whole world, he goes out into the garden and stands under the *Nicchione*. The immense verdant parallelogram lies outstretched before him; beyond and below, lies the splendid amphitheatre ending with the hemicycle; on the left, the magnificent gallery of arcades, all the way from the Court of San Damaso to the Belvedere, now nearly finished; and it is expected that the gallery on the right will soon complete the enchanting whole. Julius II. takes delight in all this; he enjoys these *belle cose*, as only

Gonzaga, published by Signor A. Luzio in his interesting study on *Federico Gonzaga, hostage at the Court of Julius II.* Michaelis was not acquainted with the documents published by Signor Luzio, hence some of the mistakes (especially in respect to the *Tiber*) in his essay, otherwise so remarkable, on the history of the Vatican statues (*Jahrb. d. deutsch. archäolog. Instit.*, 1890, v. 1.).











the Italians of his time knew how to enjoy them; and he thinks of that posterity by whom himself and his work cannot possibly be ever forgotten. Suddenly he turns, he fixes his piercing eyes upon Master Donato: “And San Pietro?” he says, in a hesitating voice. Whereat the two old men look down, and a shadow comes over the face of each; they both know perfectly well that neither will ever see the completion of the great Basilica.

But no, I am wrong. I ascribe unreasonably our melancholy and our sentimentality to these Italians of the *Rinascimento*, who only knew the joy of living—of living now in sensations, and of living again after death in glory, in the renown left behind! In reply to this question about Saint Peter’s, Bramante would probably have made a careless gesture, like the wise Epicurean that he was; and the Rovere would have sworn a big oath. He swore like a trooper, the *pontifice terribile*, and sometimes threw his crutch after the men who fled before his anger. This happened once to Michelangelo, we know.

## CHAPTER X

### MIRABILIA (1509)

ON the 31st of December, 1494, King Charles VIII. of France entered the Eternal City at the head of his Swiss and Gascons, and his numerous men-at-arms, "who had each his page and two varlets behind him." The Most Christian King, who, at the age of fourteen, had asked to have "a portrait of Rome," now felt it his duty to favour, in turn, with such a "portrait" his friends and loyal subjects in France.

In the middle of the winter he despatched to Paris a document entitled *The Marvels of Rome*, with orders that it should be printed and distributed in his capital; and here is what the good Parisians had to read, among other things, in this singular bulletin from the army:

"Of the Palaces of the Emperors. The palace of Romulus, between Santa Maria Nuova and S. Cosma, contains six houses of mercy and concord. Here Romulus set his statue, saying: 'This statue shall not fall until a virgin shall have a son.' Accordingly, as soon as the Blessed Virgin had borne her Son, this statue fell.

"Of the Capitol. It is called the Capitol because it was the head of the world where the consuls and senators lived to rule the city. Its front was covered with walls of gold,

and everywhere within there was gold and glass. Inside of the Capitol a great part of this golden palace was adorned with precious stones, said to be worth the third part of the world. Also there were as many marble images as there are provinces in the world, and each image had a drum hung around its neck, so disposed by mathematic art that when any region rebelled against the Romans, incontinent the image of that province turned its back upon the image of the city of Rome (which was the largest, as being the mistress of all the rest) and the drum which it had about its neck gave a sound. Then the guards of the Capitol told it to the senate and incontinent they sent men to expugnate the province.

“Of the Marble Horses.<sup>1</sup> The marble horses and nude men denote that in the time of the Emperor Tiberius there were two young philosophers, by name Praxiteles and Phidias, who said they were of such great sapience that, whatever the Emperor, they being absent, should say in his chamber, they would relate to him word for word; which thing they did, as they had said. And thereupon they asked no reward in money, but perpetual memory; that the philosophers should have two marble horses standing on the ground, to denote the kings of that age; and that they themselves stand by their horses denotes that, with their arms held up high and fingers spread open, they were relating things to come; and also that they are naked because, to their minds, all the science of this world is naked and open.”

<sup>1</sup> The *Horse Tamers* of Monte Cavallo.

These four things were not, however, let us say at once, of French invention; the eminent scholars who surrounded Charles VIII. did no more than translate the principal passages of a writing which had been for many centuries much in vogue on the banks of the Tiber. From the first years of the mediæval period, the City of the Seven Hills had its Baedekers and its Murrays, which, under the titles of *Regionaria*, *Graphia*, and *Mirabilia*, offered to the pilgrim the most fantastic descriptions of the places he had come to see, holding up before his eyes an imaginary Rome, "a Rome seen by moonlight," in the rays of an erudition and a poetry strangely childish and confused. The grotesque feature of it is that men continued to read these writings eagerly in the full sight of the very places which gave the lie to their descriptions; and that the new art of printing continued to multiply editions of these curious *Guides*, at a period when the labours of Flavio Biondo had already laid the foundations of a rational and scientific astigraphy. I have seen these Roman *Mirabilia*, that were printed as late as 1499, 1500, and even 1511.

That an awakened mind should at that time have conceived the idea of publishing at last a *Guide* less absurd, *Mirabilia* "freed from all these futile fables" (*fabularum nugæ*), is certainly not to be wondered at. The originality, the true merit of the excellent Canon Albertini is this,—his recognition of the fact that, beside the ancient city, so extolled in previous descriptions, there had arisen within the last fifty years, one entirely new, and equally worthy of being known. This book of Francesco Albertini bears

the significant title: *Opusculum de mirabilibus novæ et veteris urbis Romæ*.<sup>1</sup>

It is dedicated to Julius II., and the Pope is appropriately and in set terms apostrophised: "Sixtus IV. began the restoration of the City; his successors have striven to follow his example, but your Holiness has very quickly surpassed Sixtus, as well as those who came after him." The opusculum goes on in this tone; involuntarily one thinks of those *Royal Economies* in which Sully relates, by his four secretaries, the deeds and achievements of his life. We are still in the facile and fortunate days of the reign before the great tumult of Cambrai and the Holy League. The Rovere peacefully enjoys his conquests and victories; and in the chapter devoted to the triumphant generals of antiquity (*de nonnullis triumphantibus*) our author is careful not to omit the famous entry of the Pope into Rome, after the tremendous campaign of Perugia and Bologna. In the third and concluding portion of his work, the canon passes in review the monuments of the *nova urbs*; the churches and chapels, the pontifical palaces, the Belvedere, the Castle of Sant' Angelo, and the Mint; the hospitals and libraries; the porticos, streets, and squares; the fountains and bridges (*de fontibus et pontibus*); and so on. He forgets not to notice this or that fresco of Fra Angelico and of Botticelli, of Perugino and Pinturicchio; certain famous statues,—the *Apollo*, the

<sup>1</sup> The work was composed between 1506 and 1509; the first edition known is of 1510, Rome, Mazocchi. Herr A. Schmarzow published in 1886 an elegant and convenient edition of Book Third which treats of the new city.



*Laocoon*, the *Antæus*, the *Three Graces* (already at that time removed to Siena). By birth a Florentine, in his early youth even a pupil of Ghirlandaio, Albertini is a sincere lover of the arts<sup>1</sup>; but in his *Mirabilia* he denies himself all critical notices; he is not giving a picture, but making a mere inventory, in a dry and sober style, and with wearisome monotony. Merely from this enumeration, however, we gain a very vivid impression of the immense labours which had been accomplished here in fifty years, and the Rome of the Rovere appears before our eyes in all its amplitude and magnificence.

A chapter entitled *de Domibus cardinalium* shows also how rapidly, under the impulse given, chiefly by the two Ligurian pontiffs, all those who were more or less closely connected with the Vatican—prelates, high dignitaries, or apostolic bankers—began to build for themselves vast habitations, monumental dwellings, and adorn them with an intelligent luxury. At first, adjacent to the churches (San Marco, Santi Apostoli, San Damaso),—making part of them, and, as it were, sheltered by them, the cardinalic residences soon emancipated themselves, and became frankly the palaces of princes. The Palazzi di Venezia, Colonna, Doria, Pamfili, Madama, Sforza - Cesarini, Giraud, the Cancellaria, the Farnesina,—all these<sup>2</sup> are mentioned in this chapter of the *Opusculum*; of course

<sup>1</sup> He also wrote a *Memorie di molti statue et picture che sono nella inclyta Cipta di Fiorentia* (Florence, 1510), which is a precious source of information for the history of art in Italy. Besides this, he wrote a little book on music.

<sup>2</sup> Albertini also mentions others which have since disappeared; for instance, the Palazzo Piccolomini (Sant' Andrea della Valle),

under their names of that day, names borrowed sometimes from some adjacent church, sometimes from the important personage who had built or now occupied the palace. Naturally, also, these edifices presented at the beginning of the sixteenth century an aspect in some cases very different from that which they now have after repairs and restorations without number. The façades especially<sup>1</sup> were at that time generally decorated; on a dark background, relieved by a lighter border, there would be geometrical figures in *graffito*, and foliage and other delicate *motifs*. A number of the *domus cardinalium* are accompanied in our opusculum by the remark: *statuis exornata, multis marmoribus suffulta*; in some hall, it is noted that there are sarcophagi with sculptures representing the Labours of Hercules, in some *viridarium*, vases with reliefs representing sacrifices and the rape of the Sabine women.

We are now very far from the indifference that Poggio deplores fifty years earlier; we can conjecture to what a degree the soil of Rome and of the campagna had been ransacked in search of *anticaglie*; we get our first information as to the discovery of that "population of marble," which now fills the spacious halls of the Vatican.

By a singular contrast, just at the moment when a Florentine of liberal and generous mind thus makes known to the world the marvels of the *nova urbs*, and extols its and he omits many of much importance, such as the palaces of Cardinal Capranica, Ascanio Sforza, Nardini.

<sup>1</sup> And also the interior *cortili*: in the court of the Penitenzieri (formerly the palace of Domenico della Rovere) there can still be seen traces of a decoration of this kind.

future destinies, a Roman of the old stock, of the very noblest lineage, cannot console himself for the abasement of his native city, and its irremediable decadence! Marcantonio Altieri,<sup>1</sup> belonging by social and family relations to that great seignorial caste of the Sabine and Alban Mountains, who, for centuries, had done nothing but terrorise the Popes, oppress the people, and destroy each other in pitiless and purposeless strifes. In 1511, Altieri joined the Colonna, Orsini, Savelli, and others, in their mad attempt "to re-establish the ancient liberties in the Capitol"; but, in the meantime, in the years 1506-09, he employs his leisure in composing a work as grotesque in style (Italian) as in tenor and tendency,—a work which, nevertheless, at its moment, must have enjoyed a certain celebrity, since many copies of it may be found in the libraries of the peninsula. In this wild lucubration all subjects are touched upon, and, above all, the misfortunes and distresses of the times:

"Rome, once queen of the world, is to-day so fallen that its very inhabitants regard it as only a sombre and horrible cave. How many families once rich, powerful, illustrious, are now either completely extirpated, or else half annihilated! How many dwellings, once erected for the pleasure of people of quality (*per la recreazione de' gentilhomini*) are now destroyed,—their very sites scarcely to be recognised! But why speak of palaces? It suffices to glance at whole sections of the city. . . ."

<sup>1</sup> The *Nuptiali* of Marcantonio Altieri, ed. Narducci, Rome, 1873. The editor has clearly proved that this work was composed between 1506 and 1509; it is identically the date at which the Florentine canon composed his *Opusculum*.

One of the interlocutors, Pierleoni (for the *Nuptiali* is in form of a dialogue, and the *dramatis personæ* are of the high Roman *noblesse*) remarks that his *casa* is allied to the house of Austria, and that in the eleventh century it extended a protecting arm over Pope Urban against formidable foreign foes. Capoccia is by no means slow in the glorification of his ancestors, and Marcantonio himself does not fail to do violence to his own modesty; but he says that he is so *disgratiato* (has had so many misfortunes), that, *per vivattare* (in order to live) he is obliged to occupy himself with the culture of his fields, and "to treat (oh, supreme outrage!) of rustic matters with many vile and abject persons. . . . Pindar has long ago declared that against *fatum* neither wisdom, nor human endeavour, nor burning fire, nor brazen wall can prevail. . . ."

These Roman barons of the fifteenth century had not the wit or the ingenuity of their contemporaries, Sforza, Malatesta, Bentivoglio, and the rest; the idea never occurred to them of covering their moral nudity with the dazzling purple of the *Rinascimento*. In their castles of Marino, and their donjons of Monte Giordano, they went on, as before, plotting deeds of violence and acts of rapine and murder,—the while Barbo and Grimani, the Venetians, the Rovere and the Riarii of Genoa, the Medici and the Soderini of Florence, the Piccolomini and Chigi of Siena, the Castellesi of Corneto, the Caraffa of Naples, the Spanish Borgia, the French Estouteville, were building palaces and museums in the *nova urbs*; and the most illustrious among these intruders—a low-born Ligurian,

"a peasant's son"—was causing S. Peter's to be rebuilt, and the *Genesis* and the *Disputa* to be painted on the walls of the Vatican.

Albertini does not speak of the *Disputa*, nor even mention the name of Raffaello. He does indeed say that Michelangelo is executing beautiful frescos in the oratory of Sixtus IV.; but by not one word indicates their subject, of which, indeed, probably, he was ignorant.<sup>1</sup> The Florentine's *Opusculum* bears, on its final page, the date June 3, 1509; at this date the young Santi is but just beginning his work in the Stanza della Segnatura, and Buonarroti remains closely shut in his mysterious chapel, which no profane foot may enter; I doubt also whether at this moment Bramante's four enormous piers (the worthy canon already sees them "touch the sky!") are as yet very much above the level of the ground. The greatest *mirabilia novæ urbis* are yet to come.

<sup>1</sup> *Tua beatitudo* (Julius II.) *superiorem partem testudineam pulcherrimis picturis et auro exornavit, opus præclarum Michaelis Archangeli Floren.* The majority of modern writers (Messrs. Wilson, Wölflin, Milanesi, and others) have erroneously inferred from these words that a part of the vault was uncovered as early as 1509 (the date of Albertini's *Opusculum*); it was not opened to view till August, 1511 (see later, p. 274, n. 1), and Albertini evidently speaks only from common report.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE "UPPER ROOMS" (1508-1509)

#### I

"TO-DAY, November 26th, 1507," writes in his *Journal* the invaluable Paris de Grassis, "the Pope has begun to occupy the upper rooms of the palace, not caring, he tells me, to have constantly before his eyes the figure of Alexander, his predecessor and enemy, whom he calls *marane*,<sup>1</sup> and 'circumcised Jew,' and he took it very ill that this word made us laugh—me and some of the servants. I said to him that it would be possible to remove the figure and the arms of Pope Alexander wherever they were painted on the walls; he replied that that would not be proper, but that for his part he would no longer live there in presence of that wicked and criminal memory (*memoria illius pessima et scelerata*)."

It must have cost Julius II. an effort to pass the first four years of his pontificate—almost half of his reign—in this *appartamento Borgia*, where everything spoke to him of the abhorred *marane*,—walls, mouldings, and paintings; but with that instinct for great things which characterised him, it was only last of all that he thought of his personal

<sup>1</sup> This name was given in Spain to Christians of Jewish or Moorish origin, who always remained objects of suspicion.

accommodation: he thought of it after Perugia and Bologna, after S. Peter's also and the Sistina, after San Biagio and the Belvedere. He proposed to be lodged in the story above, in the part of the Vatican Palace once occupied by Pope Nicholas V.<sup>1</sup>; and a whole legion of artists was immediately engaged by Bramante to renew the splendour of these *cameræ superiores*, as the documents of the period called them. These rooms, however, were not without very interesting frescos already, by Bonfigli, Andrea del Castagno, Piero della Francesca, and others; and the destruction of these works by order of the Rovere is often deplored by the studious minds of our day. But Rome is forever the palimpsest of history: frescos, churches, pagan temples, and palaces of the Cæsars have been perpetually supplanted, and superposed one upon another, in the long course of generations and centuries; and it is not Julius II. whom we can ask to respect the monuments of the past. After the splendours of the *appartamento Borgia*, he must have found the paintings of the old masters of the Quattrocento not a little dull and old-fashioned; perhaps also they had suffered too much from the action of time. At all events it is the fact that

<sup>1</sup> Father Ehrle, in his learned *Introduction to the Frescos of the Appartamento Borgia*, p. 22, shows, from Burchard's *Journal*, that as early as the month of November, 1505, Julius II. had attempted to live on the third floor, but did not definitively abandon the Borgia apartment until November, 1507, as says Paris de Grassis. I remark, however, that as late as the close of 1512, the Pope, on occasion, made use of the *appartamento Borgia* for great diplomatic dinners. See *Journal* of Paris de Grassis, October 31, 1512 (*Vesperæ in Vigilia*, OO. SS.): *Pontifex dedit solemnissimum prandium oratoribus Parmens. in Palatio suo in Aula Pontificum inferiori.*











in the winter of 1508-09, Perugino, Suardi, Sodoma, Peruzzi, Lorenzo Lotto, Michel del Becca, Giovanni Ruisch and still others, were at work simultaneously in decorating the new abode of the Pope. They had their headquarters near by, in the Borgo, in what had been the palace of Cardinal Domenico della Rovere (now the Convento de' Penitenzieri): Master Donato Bramante often gathered them at his table there, and these repasts of the director of fine arts were famous both for good cheer and good humour.<sup>1</sup>

In this numerous assemblage of talent, recruited somewhat hastily and almost by chance, I am surprised nevertheless not to find the name at that time most illustrious of all: how could Master Donato, in a case like this, forget the divine Lionardo, his former and famous companion at the Court of the Sforza? With the death of Alexander VI. Lionardo da Vinci had lost his last protector, in the person of the horrible duc de Valentinois: he went from Milan to Florence, from Florence to Milan, living from hand to mouth, working now for the Signory of his native city, and now for the King of France, or the King's lieutenant in Lombardy, General Chaumont. In 1506, he had just completed for the Signory that famous

<sup>1</sup> In the *Codex* No. 2315, of the Corsini Library in Rome, we find many bills from these artists for their work in the *Camere superiores* of the Vatican; these accounts extend from October, 1508, to March, 1509 (Cavalcaselle, *Raffaello*, vol. ii., pp. 11, 12). In regard to the suppers of the artists at Bramante's lodgings, we have the contemporary testimony of Corporali (Vermiglioli, *Memorie di Bernardino Pinturicchio*, p. 5. See also Temanza, *Vita del Sansovino*).

cartoon of the *Battle of Anghiari*, which was at the time esteemed one of the most splendid manifestations of art; but neither then nor later did Julius II. ever testify a desire to enroll the artist under his flag! That the genius of broadest scope of any in the Renaissance, that the immortal creator of *The Supper* in Milan should have been absent from the reunion of the famous painters at that time gathered in Rome by the great Mæcenas of the day, that he was not there with Bramante, Buonarrothi, and Santi,—this is one of the malicious tricks that chance plays sometimes with the logic of events, one of those transcendent ironies of Fate which bring to mind the mysterious, disturbing smile that the painter of *La Gioconda* has given to some of his female heads. Was it the fatal shadow of Cesare Borgia that did the artist harm in the Rovere's mind? Or was it not rather the reputation, too well established, of the sublime delayer, of his slow, vagrant work, always reconsidered, never satisfying? But it would have been curious to see the *pontefice terribile* in collision, not merely with Michelangelo's shy and savage temper, but also with the genial indolence of Lionardo.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lionardo was never in Rome until after the death of Julius II., and Vasari (ed. Milanese, iv., p. 47) relates on this subject a characteristic *mot* of Leo X. "The Pope having given an order to Lionardo, the latter began distilling oils and herbs for the varnish. The Pope, hearing of this, exclaimed: '*Oimè!* the man will never do anything; he is thinking of the end of the work before he has made a beginning of it!'" April 3, 1501, the General of the Carmelites wrote from Florence to Isabella d'Este (Gonzaga): "*Ma quanto me occorre la vita di Lionardo è varia e indeterminata forte, si che pare vivere a giornata*" (*Archivio storico dell' Arte*, i., p. 46).

## The "Upper Rooms" (1508-1509) 155

Of the works executed in the Pope's new abode during this winter of 1508-09, there have been preserved to us one entire ceiling, the work of Perugino, and, on the other ceilings, several minor paintings which are attributed to Sodoma.<sup>1</sup> Perugino's ceiling is certainly the strangest and most unfortunate of the compositions of the great Umbrian master. We see here the Three Persons of the Trinity, surrounded by the Twelve Apostles kneeling and in an ecstasy; the Christ between the two allegorical figures of Justice and Grace; lastly a Temptation, where Satan, notwithstanding his horns, has the venerable air of a patriarch.<sup>2</sup> Evidently Vanucci in his old age sought to be original and profound, and so fell into queerness and nonsense.

Quite different are the little paintings of Sodoma. Here we are in full Renaissance, with its charming elegance and its classic enchantment. We have, as it were, a foretaste of the Farnesina and the Villa Madama. The graceful artist shows inexhaustible inventiveness in his panels painted in flat tints and his little coloured frames with backgrounds of gold. Seeking inspiration from so many antique bas-reliefs and so many verses of Anacreon, Bazzi retraces by turns Roman military scenes, and the adventures of Venus, Eros, Vulcan, and Antiope. War and Love! Subjects perhaps unsuited to the abode

<sup>1</sup> We know that Raffaello preserved Perugino's work as a mark of respect to his former master, and that he saved, as far as possible, the ornamental part in the ceilings of the Incendio and the Eliodoro.

<sup>2</sup> This last composition is so confused that Cavalcaselle finds in it God the Father between the Son and the Spirit of Evil.

of a Pope, but it was perhaps to celebrate the fame of Julius Cæsar, and Julius II. might take what part of it belonged to him.

We lack information as to the work done in these rooms by Suardi, Lotto, and the other rivals; we know only that, in the spring of 1509, all these artists were still at their posts and at their labours when a decision suddenly dismissed the industrious band and scattered them to the winds. A pupil of Vanucci, scarcely twenty-five years of age, and just arrived from Florence, had submitted to the Pope some specimens of his art, and that art had enraptured the skilled connoisseur, and had caused him to form the highest opinion of the *garzone*, had also caused him to become disgusted with the paintings at that moment in process of execution in the Vatican Palace. Imperious and impetuous as usual, the Rovere unceremoniously dismisses Perugino, Bazzi, and the rest, and orders their work to be effaced in the "upper rooms"; the decoration of the *appartamento* is henceforth entrusted to Raffaello Santi alone.

He was completely unknown on the banks of the Tiber, and but little known—whatever has been said—on the banks of the Arno even. On the eve of his dazzling success in Rome, and after a residence of some years in Florence, he still has need (April, 1508) of a letter of recommendation to the gonfalonier Soderini, "in respect to a certain hall of which his Lordship has the disposal."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Letter of Raffaello to his maternal uncle, Simone Ciarla, in Perugia (Florence, April 21, 1508). It is truly surprising to see so many modern biographers, with Cavalcaselle at their head, draw a

He had, however, already completed more than one remarkable picture, had painted especially several of those Madonnas which are now the pride of the richest galleries in Europe; but in the matter of great mural compositions—the only paintings which at this epoch established the reputation of a master—his work up to this time included scarcely more than a fresco in the church of San Severo in Perugia, which was left unfinished. It was evidently to give proof of his talent in monumental art that Raffaello wished to obtain one of the halls of the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence and, to that end, sought a letter of introduction to Soderini. He sought this letter from his sovereign, Francesco Maria della Rovere, who had just succeeded Duke Guidubaldo, always a friend and protector to the Santi family. Francesco Maria was the favourite nephew of Julius II., and it is legitimate to suppose that instead of recommending the painter to the Florentine gonfalonier,

picture purely imaginative of these years, 1504-08, in Florence, and represent to us young Santi as the equal in reputation of Michelangelo and Lionardo da Vinci, when this letter to Simone Ciarla (which they quote, nevertheless, in full) refutes indirectly, but most peremptorily, all that it pleases them to imagine respecting the young Urbinate. As to the supposed letter of Giovanna della Rovere to Soderini (October 10, 1504), and that of Raffaello to Francia (Rome, September 5, 1508), I agree with Signor Cavalcaselle in rejecting them as apocryphal. Note further that up to the Roman epoch Raffaello worked only for the small Umbrian cities, for ladies resident in Perugia (Maddalena degli Oddi, Atalanta Baglioni), or for second-rate amateurs in Tuscany. Amateurs of the highest rank and on the watch for artists of celebrity (Isabella d'Este, Agostino Chigi, and the like) gave him no orders, and a connoisseur like Albertini does not even mention his name in the *Memoriale di pitture nella città di Florentia*, which appeared in 1510.



the prince preferred to send him to his uncle the Pope, the famous Mæcenas. Thus would be naturally explained the sudden appearance (late in 1508 or early in 1509) of Raffaello in Rome; the kindnesses of Perugino, his former master, and of Bramante, his fellow-countryman, would do the rest.

But what a date in the records of the mind was that day when the young man, of slender figure, long, dark hair, and olive skin—as we see him yet in the fresco of the *School of Athens* at the side of his master Vanucci—came to present to the old Pope some of his pictures, drawings, or sketches! It would have amazed the shrewd Tuscan diplomatists at the Court of Julius II., it would have amazed Julius II. himself, if it could have been predicted to them that this very informal audience of the poor painter from Urbino was to have a great deal more importance in the history of the world than the gravest deliberations of the League of Cambrai, and the most secret negotiations as to the affairs of Ferrara.

## II

We no longer feel for Raffaello the excessive and naïve admiration of past times: we have learned to understand better the limitations of his art. The divine Santi, as everybody now admits, cannot at all lay claim to the formidable drawing of Michelangelo, nor to the marvellous modelling of Lionardo; and when we speak of his colouring we carefully avoid mentioning the name of Titian. Also we must say this: the Urbinate has neither the dramatic power of Giotto, nor the emotional depth of Buonar-

roti, nor the religious mysticism, so sincere and so appealing, of Fra Angelico; still less do we ever see him in hand to hand struggle with Nature, plucking her secret from her like the author of *La Gioconda*.<sup>1</sup> But he has an exquisite, transcendent feeling of beauty, and a marvellous comprehension of composition, possessed by no other painter of the Renaissance: these are his two ruling powers, the "two wings" which have uplifted him to immortality.<sup>2</sup>

The sense of beauty with him is innate and immanent. It manifests itself from the first strokes of the brush that the boy adds to the painting of his teacher Perugino or his fellow-pupil Lo Spagno, and it develops and strengthens itself continuously from his Holy Virgins, attempted timidly, copying the drawings of Pinturicchio, up to the sublime *Vision of Saint Sixtus*.

This is not the case with his gift of composition, the second great power of the painter of the Stanze. This gift was not laid by fairies in the cradle of the Umbrian child, and it was lacking to the youth even, all through his Florentine period: the magnificent power appears comparatively late, bursting forth sudden, unexpected, armed cap-à-pie like Minerva: it reveals itself all at once, in complete maturity and splendour, as soon as young Santi touches Roman soil and takes possession of the "Upper Rooms."

Nothing is more instructive on this point than the

<sup>1</sup> *Il dipintore disputa e gareggia colla natura*, was said by Lionardo da Vinci.

<sup>2</sup> *Duabus alibus homo sublevatur a terrenis. Imitatio*, ii., chap. iv.

picture of the *Entombment* of the Villa Borghese, commonly known as the *Deposition*.<sup>1</sup> It is the most important picture of the *pre-Roman* Raffaello, and bears the date 1507, a date very near that of his first fresco in the Vatican Palace. It is well known that this picture was ordered by Atalanta Baglioni in expiation of the fatal day when she was obliged to disown and curse her only son, Grifonetto, the author of the *gran tradimento* of August 15, 1500,—a horrible nocturnal ambushade which cost so many lives to the Baglioni family, assembled in Perugia to witness the marriage of Astorre Baglioni to the very illustrious lady, Lavinia Colonna.

The morrow of this frightful massacre—the Scarlet Wedding of Perugia—Grifonetto in his turn lay in the public square of the city, the victim of the followers of Gianpaolo Baglioni, and Atalanta rushed out to receive her son's last breath, and to become reconciled to him on condition that, on his part, he would forgive his murderer. "She asked him to give a sign of pardon," relates the contemporary chronicler Materazzo, "and the *giovinetto* [he was but twenty-five!] raised his hand, then expired amid the infinite benedictions of his mother, instead of the maledictions of the night before." The noble matron, so cruelly afflicted, some years later had the touching idea of offering her own grief to the

<sup>1</sup> Under the general name *Deposizione*, is understood in Italy the *Descent from the Cross*, the *Pietà* or *Lamento*, as well as the *Entombment*. The *Lamento* differs from the *Pietà* only in the greater number of figures which surround the dead Christ, and the two appellations are often confused with each other.

## The "Upper Rooms" (1508-1509) 161

Mother who was, above all, the *Dolorosa*: the picture of the *Deposition* was to adorn the expiatory altar built at her expense in the church of San Francesco in Perugia (1507).

For an artist like Raffaello, how stimulating was such an order! Many reasons also lead us to believe that he had spent the year 1500 in Perugia and been an eye-witness of the poignant scene which, in Materazzo's narrative, already assumes the proportions of a *Pietà*: the public square, full of agitated spectators; the poor mother, "still young and beautiful," holding upon her knees Grifonetto, "a second Ganymede"; and beside her, weeping, Zenobia Sforza, her daughter-in-law. "The crowd gave way respectfully for the passage of these two noble ladies when they traversed the piazza, in their garments stained with blood."<sup>1</sup>

A large number of preparatory studies (dispersed now among the various galleries in Europe,—the Louvre, Uffizi, Albertina, University of Oxford; or the private collections of Malcolm, Bale, Burchall, Gay, and others) testify as much to the extreme zeal shown by Raffaello in the execution of this order as to the hesitations and experiments of the artist at the beginning of the work. A series of

<sup>1</sup> One must read this incomparable narrative of Materazzo (*Archiv. stor. ital.*, vol. xvi., part ii.) to know what fierce and savage passion this epoch of the Renaissance could contain, even here in "mystic" Umbria, not far from that valley of the Subasio all fragrant with the *fioretti* of S. Francis and the roses of the Portiuncula; not far too from the *bottega* where Perugino sells his Holy Virgins, so admired for their languid sweetness, and Raffaello, perhaps, in the atelier behind the *bottega* is painting some *Madonna Solly* or *Dietosalvi*.

these studies puts it beyond doubt that he had at first regarded his subject as a *Pietà* or *Lamento*—of which Giotto had given a masterly example in a fresco in the Arena, of which also Perugino had lately (1495) painted a very beautiful one for the church of Santa Clara in Florence (now in the Pitti, Hall of Saturn). Among Raffaello's sketches bearing upon this first intention as to the picture, must be mentioned, first of all, an admirable drawing in bistre now in the Louvre (Braun, No. 239) in which we see the dead Christ supported in his mother's arms, surrounded by holy women kneeling at his feet, while Joseph of Arimathea stands behind the group, and the Beloved Disciple advances, hesitating, with a feeling of touching reserve. Another series of sketches centres around a totally different theme,—the Entombment or *Sepoltura*. The holy women and the disciples are here in the background merely; the principal figures are two robust men, who lift the dead Christ to lay Him in "the new sepulchre hewn in the rock" of which the Gospel speaks. This new form of a *Deposizione* had found hitherto but little favour with the Italian masters,—except Mantegna's famous engraving,<sup>1</sup> I can recall only a certain *grisaille* of Signorelli in the *Cappella Nuova* at Orvieto; and this conception would be, apparently, much less attractive to the pupil of Perugino, because it replaces the spectacle of moral suffering by that of physical effort. But Mantegna's powerful engraving evidently fascinated him; perhaps also he saw here an excellent pretext for showing his ability to represent energetic attitudes and feats of muscu-

<sup>1</sup> *Œuvre de Mantegna* (Armand Durand, plate No. iii.).











lar strength. It was then the year 1506; Mantegna had just died; and Michelangelo had just exhibited in Florence that cartoon of the *War of Pisa* which was rapturously admired there.

The painting in the Borghese gallery presents to us a sort of rather forced combination of a *Lamento* and a *Sepoltura*. In the foreground the dead Christ is carried by two men of athletic build, who seem to bend under the weight; behind, in the middle distance, S. John, S. Peter, and the Magdalen are weeping; at the right the Virgin swoons, supported by the holy women. This last group is highly impressive; also the nude figure of the Christ enchants the eye with the gentleness of the expression and the perfection of the modelling; and what penetrating sadness in the sober gesture of S. John! Notwithstanding all these merits of the highest order, the *Deposizione* never is able to stir the soul deeply; "the *ensemble* leaves one cold," is the criticism often made. It would be more correct to say that there is absolutely no *ensemble*, and here lies the radical fault of the work. The drama before us lacks all unity of action: there is no connection between the different episodes; the eye wanders from one to another, without finding any central, salient point, and is attracted, only as by violence and most unfortunately, by the emphasis and the rigidity of the two necrophori in the foreground with strained muscles, legs set apart, and heads destitute of all refinement. It was a strange idea for the painter of grace, tenderness, and restrained emotion to seek to shine here by an anatomical study, a bit of *bravura*! And how much one regrets, in general, that he

had not carried out his earlier project, that of the drawing in the Louvre, which was so much more suited to the character of his genius! This project was more simple also, it had unity, and it led the thought more directly to the Perugian tragedy.

Not only in the *Deposizione* do we see the young Urbinate thus combine two independent thoughts at the risk of complicating the work and destroying its unity. The painting which was ordered in 1503 by Maddalena degli Oddi at Perugia (and is now in the Vatican gallery <sup>1</sup>) shows us an *Incoronata* grafted upon an *Assunta*; while the delicious predella associates, in a manner altogether unusual, the shepherds with the three magi in adoration of the Divine Infant. Evidently the young artist is resolved to innovate vigorously, though his innovation should be nothing more than the coupling of two subjects, hitherto always treated separately; he particularly desires to bring about ingenious contrasts, as of the robust bearers of the dead Christ with the emotional figures of the holy women,—of the celestial glory of the Mother of God with her humble tomb upon the earth,—of the pompous adoration of the kings of the East with the simple, pathetic fervour of the humble shepherds. But much more even than in the *Entombment* does the incoherence of the parts become unfortunate, in this *Coronation of the Virgin* with its two distinct horizons having no connecting tie; and

<sup>1</sup> Hall III.: the predella is in the first hall, on the left of the entrance. A cartoon of Raffaello's in the Museum at Pesth gives the original scheme, a simple *Assunta*. See Pulsky, *Raphael in d. ungar. Reichsgalerie*, 1882.

the equilibrium of the groups is completely destroyed in the *Adoration* by the tumultuous procession which invades and fills more than half the canvas in the train of the Magian kings. A lack of *ensemble* and balance is the constant characteristic of all the productions of the pre-Roman Raffaello, as soon as he quits the enchanted circle of his Madonnas to venture upon themes more extensive and having more action. The *Sposalizio* of the Brera is the one exception in this respect, but in the *Sposalizio*, as is well known, the composition is due entirely to Perugino<sup>1</sup>; the pupil only refined it in his radiant transcription, illumined it with beauty and grace, lent to it his soul.

But if now, following the chronological order in Raffaello's work, we pass from the *Entombment* to the *Disputa* of the Stanza della Segnatura,—from the Borghese Villa to the "Upper Rooms" of the Vatican Palace, we find ourselves at once in the presence of a marvellous transformation, and what has been heretofore the weak side of the Urbinate suddenly appears to us as his greatest strength and his imperishable glory. The abstract and complicated subject of a dogma—and what a dogma!—is rendered here with a clearness, a plasticity, and picturesqueness altogether unequalled; the extremely difficult problem of a double action, on earth and in heaven, is resolved with an ease and a charm which do not leave to the eye a single instant of doubt or hesitation.

"With what art," says M. Émile Michel, "these figures of the *Disputa* are subordinated one to another so that

<sup>1</sup> See the *Sposalizio* of Perugino in the Gallery of Caen.

they all concur in the expression of the *ensemble* ! What symmetry and order, delicately veiled, preside over the equilibrium of the masses, over the outline of the profiles, over the direction of the lines which enclose and support this imposing structure ! ”

And we must not forget that the *Disputa* itself makes part of a structure still more vast and more imposing, that a common thought binds together *all* the paintings of the Stanza from the great pages of the walls to the medallions and angular paintings of the ceiling, and that in beginning his first Roman fresco Raffaello had already, of necessity, the full and entire conception of the *ensemble* of the Segnatura, a world multifold and one !

Also we must not forget how undeveloped was at this time that science of composition which the pupil of Vanucci now carried at the very outset to the highest degree of perfection ; with what carelessness as to the principal idea of a work most painters had until now filled one frame after another with a crowd of useless figures and disconnected episodes ! A creative genius like Masaccio, who under so many aspects suggested Raffaello, still did not hesitate to bring together, in his *Tribute of S. Peter*, three successive incidents of the same action, or to unite the most incongruous elements in his *Resurrection of the Child* and his *Miracle of Tabitha*. Strange to say, even Michelangelo allows himself this awkwardness at many points in the Sistine vault ; and a glance over the lower part of the same chapel shows us at once what the near or remote predecessors of Raffaello dared to do in binding together and heaping up subjects,—there

## The "Upper Rooms" (1508-1509) 167

are as many as five different stories in the *Temptation of Christ*; five, also, in the *Death of Moses*; and I abandoned in despair the attempt to ascertain the number in the *Moses in Egypt*.<sup>1</sup> What a prodigious number of supernumeraries, besides, in these frescos of Ghirlandaio, Signorelli, Botticelli, Perugino, and Pinturicchio,—personages who have no part or interest in what goes on,—in realistic costume of the time strangely incongruous with the traditional drapery of the Biblical heroes in the picture! The striking fidelity to life of these personages and their grand character, the artist's sincerity and his real talent, as well as the beauty and dignity of certain of the groups, must not deceive us as to the fundamental vice of a composition which, instead of a drama, gives us only a diffuse, epic narrative, with its digressions and repetitions, its prolixity and its padding, its mute and inert masses, its chance incidents,—“its catalogue of ships, and its review from the top of the wall.”

The painter of the Stanze gives only the drama, only the principal scene: a scene powerfully concentrated, rigorously held to the three unities,—of time, of place, and of action; no episode in the background, no aside on the edges, no parasitic personage; each figure concurs efficaciously in the effect of the *ensemble*. This law of concentration and unity, which has remained to our time the primordial and vital rule of every historic composition,

<sup>1</sup> The same frame contains *Adam's Fall* and his *Expulsion from Paradise*. In the *Drunkenness of Noah*: at the left, the patriarch digging up the ground; at the right, the impious act of Ham. Compare also the history of Haman, etc.

Raffaello obeyed as truly in his decoration of the Vatican Stanze, of the Loggie, and of the Farnesina as he did in his cartoons for tapestry and his drawings for the engravings of Marcantonio Raimondi; but with what discreet art he could always veil the rigours of his law with a graceful charm, and turn the ribs of the framework into so many lines of beauty! In speaking above of the master-powers of Santi, I confess to the omission of one, from the mere difficulty of finding a name for it,—I mean that mysterious power that he had of giving his pictures a harmony, a *eurythmia* as secret as it was penetrating, and making a work of painting a music for the eye.

By what initiation or by what impulsion did the author of the *Deposizione* suddenly become the sublime creator of the *Disputa*? How did the Florentine apprentice, so embarrassed in arranging his figures and his groups, acquire an incomparable mastery of this science so soon as he had touched the soil of Rome? I have often asked myself this question, without ever reaching a satisfactory reply. For Bramante and for Michelangelo, doubtless, as well as for Raffaello, Rome was the point of departure in a marvellous evolution: but I see yet, in the Eternal City, the Theatre of Marcellus, the Colosseum, the Thermæ which inspired Master Donato with his new architecture; I see there also the Column of Trajan, the *Horse-Tamers*, the *Laocoon*, the *Torso*, and the other classic marbles from which Buonarroti finally derived his principles,—the nude, the colossal, and the impassioned; but I seek in vain the monument or the event which could have revealed to Santi the prin-

ciples of composition. This sudden transformation of his genius in the "Upper Rooms," is like a miracle; and perhaps one must say with the poet:

*"State contenti, humana gente, al quia !"*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Purgatorio*, iii., 36.



## CHAPTER XII

### IN THE CAMERA DELLA SEGNATURA

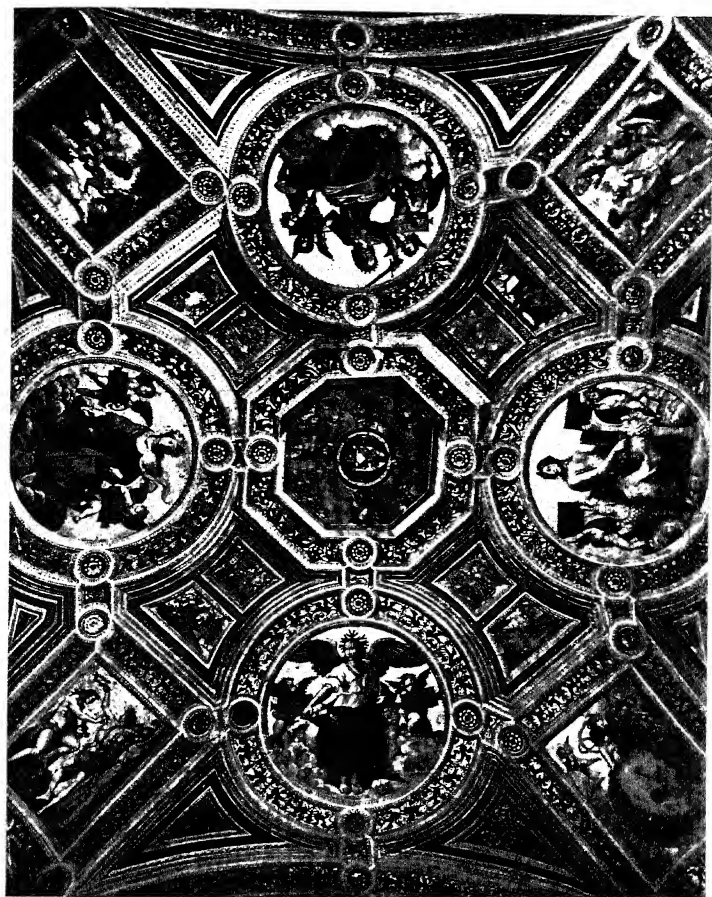
#### I

THE Vatican clock was striking three: visitors belated in the Picture Gallery, the Loggie, and the Stanze were hastily traversing the Camera della Segnatura on their way to the Galleria Pia to recover their umbrellas and sticks: first, a lively group of Frenchmen, full of laughter, even on the threshold of the Sistine Chapel; then a flock of young English girls, visibly delighted at having "done" their Raffaello; lastly, a party of Americans, hopelessly confused under the torrent of explanations poured out upon their heads by Cook's "licensed guide." I myself was taking a farewell look at the *Disputa*, and was about to join in the general exodus, when a friendly "*E come sta ? sta bene ?*" brought me to a stand.

The man who spoke to me was a prelate; he walked slowly, with a dragging step; he was owlish to look at, but with vivacious and piercing eyes. I had made his acquaintance a few days before, sitting next him at a dinner-party. On that occasion our talk was altogether of Austria and the Triple Alliance, and I took him for a diplomat of the papal Court. Later I learned, however, that he was a canon of S. Peter's, and held a post of confidence in the Vatican. He now made a slight gesture with his hand, and the officials ceased their preparations for closing.









"You are very fond of the Segnatura, I have noticed," the canon said, putting his arm through mine; "you come here often; I have seen you, and I have felt a desire to bid you welcome to these places, which to me are dear above all others. I am far past the *mezzo del cammin da vita*; but in the presence of these paintings I recover all the enthusiasm of my twenties,—notwithstanding what has been done to destroy it for me!—Ah, my dear sir, beware of innovators!"

This concluding appeal was quite unexpected, and the tone in which it was spoken almost made me smile; it was a mysterious and distressed tone, like Iago's when he says to the Moor: "O beware, my lord, of jealousy!"

"Whom do you mean by innovators, monsignore?" I asked.

"Whom should I mean but all these critics and writers of the present day, who seem to have conspired to turn our poor Cinquecento upside down, and assume to know much more about it than good old Vasari did!"

"This scarcely seems the place in which to praise Vasari overmuch: those pages of his on the Camera della Segnatura contain actual enormities. He will have it that the *Scuola d' Atene* preceded the *Disputa* in date,—which cannot be thought of! And his interpretation of the *School* is absolute nonsense."

"Very true, very true! In Vasari's time the Stanze were not accessible any day as they are now. There were no photographs by aid of which to verify one's impressions and notes. Besides, who is saying that Vasari is infallible? Doubtless he made many mistakes,—from carelessness

and also from ignorance, and we are justified in correcting him whenever he is contradicted by evidence or authentic documents. But for all that, I can never forget that the painter-historian of Arezzo was the eye-witness, industrious and intelligent, of the Cinquecento; and that to him we owe, in the main, nearly all the facts we have about the masters of that period. Now this is something which is overlooked, unfortunately, by these innovators, coming so many centuries later, with their interminable hypotheses and their fanciful constructions.

“ For instance,—consider the *novissima verba* of our innovators as to this Camera della Segnatura, in which we are now standing. They have discovered that this Stanza was a Library,—that it was the *biblioteca nova, secreta, perpulchra*, which Julius II.—according to Albertini, in his *Mirabilia*—caused to be fitted up for his own private use and ornamented with exquisite paintings, magnificent marbles, and rare and precious books. Theology, Philosophy, Jurisprudence, and Poetry,—are not these the suitable divisions of any ‘normal’ library, and are they not here represented in the four allegorical figures of the ceiling? What a profusion, too, of books, codes, rolls, in the hands of doctors of the Church, classic sages, legislators, and poets on all these walls! Is it not an evident and ingenious allusion to the destination of the hall? All this marvellous cycle of frescos in the Segnatura is but an Illustrated Catalogue,—this very thing has been said, in so many words!”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Jahrbuch der Kön. preuss. Kunstsammlungen*, 1893, pp. 1 et seq.

"It was not happily said, I admit; but possibly the hypothesis in itself merits attention."

"What chiefly merits attention, I think, is this,—that no contemporary, no author of the sixteenth century ever speaks of a *libreria* in this place; and that Paris de Grassis, master of ceremonies to Julius II. and to Leo X., knows this hall by its present name, the *Camera Signaturæ*."

"They explain this name by the fact that here Julius II. was accustomed to sign his more important acts of government."

"Are you quite sure of this *fact*, my dear sir? And—granting the fact, even—it remains none the less strange that, instead of calling a cat a cat, as the French say, and a library a library, they should have found and retained for it a name so peculiar, due to a circumstance so fortuitous! However, let us drop, for a moment, the question of the name, and look at dates. The opusculè of Albertini bears on its last page the date, June 5, 1509; now, in the month of June, 1509, Raffaello had but just commenced his work in the Camera della Segnatura; how can it be, then, that the author of the *Mirabilia* could already have seen a library, adorned with frescos, statues, books and so on, in a hall which for years to come must remain in the hands of painters, joiners, and floor-layers? For Raffaello did not complete his cycle here until the month of August, 1511; you can read the date in the embrasure of the windows. The doors and shutters are certainly of a period later still, for they bear the arms and emblems of the Medici; and in the pavement also, beside the name of the Ligurian Pope, you observe Leo X.'s



two famous devices: the *Suave jugum* and the *Semper si volge*.—By the way, I commend to your notice this beautiful floor of the Segnatura ; it is the only original pavement in the Stanze which has remained to our time. And, lastly, where, in this narrow room shut in between two courtyards, shall we look for the galleries and porches, the *aulæ et deambulatoria* which Albertini mentions as surrounding the library ?”

“ But where, then, was the private library of Julius II., which Bembo also mentions admiringly, in a letter addressed to the Ligurian pontiff ? ”

“ Where was that library ? My dear sir, I do not know. Many other marvels of the epoch of Julius II. and Leo X. have vanished hence, without our being able to-day to find their trace, or even their place. The interior of this part of the Vatican which is called the *palazzo vecchio* (the old palace) has been so torn to pieces and reconstructed, notably during the pontificates of Paul III. and Paul V.,<sup>1</sup> that earlier arrangements are no longer at all recognisable; I could not even tell you, for instance, just where were the private apartments of Julius II., in this third story.”

“ What! do you mean to say that Julius II. did not occupy these very Stanze where we are ? ”

<sup>1</sup> Chattard, *Nuova Descrizione del Vaticano*, Roma, 1762, vol. ii.: Paolo III fu che da i fondamenti ristabilir fece i Cortili, i Portici, le Sale e Camere del Vaticana Palazzo (p. xxvi.). . . . Paolo V ristaurò le Sale fabbricate da Paolo III, dopo aver gettato a terra buona parte delle ponteficie abitazioni, ed il portico eretto da Alessandro VI, attesa la nuova aggiunta della moderna Basilica (p. xxxi.).

“ I greatly doubt it; notwithstanding the dictum of our modern authors! I beg you to tell me how we can suppose that the Rovere occupied rooms in which artists and artisans had never ceased working up to the day of his death, and indeed, long after? For what we have just now established as to the Segnatura applies equally to the halls of Heliodorus, of the Incendio, and of Constantine. In this last-mentioned hall, for instance, the superb marble chimney-piece bears the inscription: *Jul. II. Ligur. P. P. II.*, with the oak-tree of the Rovere on each side; but the frescos are, as everybody knows, of the period of Leo. X. and Clement VII.; on the window-shutters you can even see the lilies and the unicorn of the Farnese; on the ceiling are the arms of Sixtus V.! No one of these rooms was completed during the lifetime of Julius II.; the Ligurian Pope evidently occupied some other portion of the third story, and the Stanze were intended to serve finally as state apartments on occasions of ceremony or festivity.”

“ But the Rovere signed his decrees and bulls here——”

“ Oh! I see; you make great account of Julius II.’s supposed *signatures* here, in presence of the *Parnasso* and the *Disputa*! But you would be much at a loss to show me any testimony of the sixteenth century, or even of the seventeenth, to prove it! I am sorry for your legend, but it is pure fiction, the invention—truly amusing—of writers altogether modern. The name—at first sight, odd—of *Camera Signaturæ*, perplexed them; it had no significance to their minds; whereupon they set about constructing a theory, namely, that, ‘ from time to

time,' Julius II. came here to sign briefs and bulls. Others, having vaguely heard about *Signatura Gratiæ*, preferred to have it that he came here to sign pardons. No man asked himself for what reason—upon what necessity—the aged pontiff should thus have put himself to the trouble of being carried to a hall *ad hoc*, in order to accomplish what he could just as well, or even better, have done in his usual office.

“Now if these gentlemen had happened to think of looking into any book concerning the Roman Curia which they had at hand, they would very soon have discovered that *Signatura* has been, from time out of mind, the name of a great ecclesiastical tribunal,—the high court of appeal from decisions of the *Rota*, the *Dateria*, the *Camera Apostolica*, and the others. The most illustrious cardinals have at different periods sat in this high court; the greatest Popes have passed through it, in their line of preferment. Towards the close of the fifteenth century, in the reign of Innocent VIII., it was divided into two distinct chambers,—a *Signatura Justitiæ* and a *Signatura Gratiæ*; the latter having cognisance of certain exceptional cases which, by their complicated and abnormal character, lay outside of the established rules of justice or equity, and could only be decided by the sovereign grace of the pontiff in person. The two courts held their sessions in the Vatican Palace, but while the *Signatura Justitiæ* was presided over by a cardinal-prefect, and made its decisions independently, the *Signatura Gratiæ*, having usually the same personnel, could only deliberate in presence of the Pope, and had the right of deliberation only.









“All this, my dear sir, these makers of hypotheses might have learned, if it had occurred to them to consult Gomesius, Danielli, the Cardinal di Lucca, the *Prattica della Curia romana*, or even Moroni’s excellent dictionary, *sub voce*; then they would have found it quite natural that Julius II., abandoning the *appartamento Borgia* for the rooms just over it, should have devoted one of these Stanze to this high court of justice, which was inseparable from the person of the Pope.”

The canon stopped speaking and with a shrewd glance at me seemed to enjoy, discreetly, my confusion, which, I confess, was great. He took from his pocket a gold snuff-box of very beautiful workmanship, looked at it for a few seconds before opening it, offered it to me, by way of formality, then regaled himself with a good pinch, which he deliberately enjoyed. After this he went on:

“It was, then, a court-room which Raffaello had to decorate here in 1509, at the beginning of his work in the Vatican: and he took for his model another court-room, famous in this respect,—the one which his master, Vanucci, *il Perugino*, had adorned some years earlier in the capitol of the Baglioni,—a hall which Julius II. had undoubtedly seen and admired in the month of September, 1506, when he entered that city in triumph, and remained there over a week. Any one who has visited Perugia will easily recognise the many traits of kinship between the Cambio and the Segnatura,—the ceiling in compartments entirely covered with arabesques and great medallions on



blue or gold grounds; the tall, allegorical figures of Justice, Prudence, Moderation, and Strength, hovering, as it were, over the august court, its ensign and memento; and then, the heroes and sages of antiquity face to face with the saints and prophets of the Bible. One of the most charming effects of the Cambio is due—you remember, I am sure—to an ingenious association of wainscoting and fresco,—the paintings of the upper part of the hall forming a most harmonious contrast with the sombre decoration of the stalls and desks below. The pupil of Perugino did not neglect a combination so admirable, and the greatest artist in *intarsio* at that time living, Fra Giovanni da Verona, was employed for the stalls, doors, and marquetry of the Stanza. All this woodwork of the Veronese *frate*, which Vasari praises with enthusiasm, unfortunately disappeared very early—as far back as the time of the sack of Rome, very probably—and the marquetry under the frescos was replaced by the *grisailles* of Perino del Vaga, which remain to this day; but it is important to reconstruct in thought this original setting of the frescos to judge of the appearance of the room in the time of Julius II. and Leo X. and of the resemblance, much more striking, which it then presented to the tribunal at Perugia. It was a charming trait in that good and grand genius, Santi, to have made it a point himself to call attention to his model by placing his own likeness in company with his old master's, the painter of the Cambio, in a corner of one of the frescos of the Segnatura, for, if our friends the innovators will pardon me, I persist in recognising (with Vasari) Perugino, and not Sodoma, in the figure at Raffaello's side, in

the *School of Athens*.<sup>1</sup> But while so manifestly following the Cambio, in the arrangement of the space to be covered and in the picturesque distribution of the parts, how greatly the Segnatura differed from it in amplitude of subject and beauty of form! To what a point each detail here proclaims *discipulus super magistrum*! To what a point the general thought of the Renaissance reveals itself in the conception of this Stanza, with a power, a fascination, entirely unknown to Vanucci's essay at classic and Biblical syncretism,—a timid and awkward essay, altogether Umbrian and provincial!”

“Just as the great humanists of the Vatican were men of vastly broader and more original minds than the worthy Professor Maturanzo, secretary of the Perugian magistracy, who laid out Vanucci's programme for him?”

“But there you have another conjecture, very much in favour with our modern authors,—as to which I am obliged to hesitate. These authors will not admit that Raffaello was able of himself to produce the paintings of the Segnatura; and they persist in seeking for him inspirers who have remained unknown,—promoters of programmes,—‘midwives of ideas,’—to quote the phrase of Socrates. Some, taking literally a sentence in Giovio: *pinxit ad præscriptum Fulii pontificis*,—have reached the amusing conclusion that this inspirer was Julius II., in person! Imagine, if you can, the *pontefice terribile* medi-

<sup>1</sup> Sodoma (born in 1477) was but thirty-three at the time the *School of Athens* was painted, and Raffaello would not have been likely to assume toward him the modest attitude that we see here. One only needs besides to recall the authentic picture of Perugino in the Cambio to reject Morelli's hypothesis.

tating the theme of the *Disputa*,—searching out the data for the *School of Athens*!—Other critics have spoken, as you do, of the great humanists of the Vatican, and have mentioned Castiglione, and Bembo, and Bibbiena; but the conscientious Passavant calls attention to the fact that not one of these *beaux esprits* of the Renaissance happened to be in Rome at the period when young Santi began to work there! At that period I discover scarcely any other humanists among the people about Julius II.—who, by the way, cared very little for learned men—but Sigismondo de' Conti, his confidential secretary, and the famous Tommaso Inghirami, his chaplain and, later, his librarian; these two were learned men, no doubt, but in no degree remarkable, or capable of indicating the path for a Raffaello. I would not say that they may not both have been very helpful to him with their erudition, and with valuable details as to this or that doctor of the Church or philosopher of antiquity whom he proposed to introduce in his frescos. Two remarkable works of Raffaello—Inghirami's portrait and the *Madonna di Foligno*, which was painted, as we know, for Sigismondo de' Conti—may very probably have been the great artist's recompense to his learned informants for the details of archæology and history which they gave him.

“In the *Madonna di Foligno*, Sigismondo de' Conti—whom Raffaello's father, the elder Santi, praises in a rhymed chronicle—is represented as a donor, humbly kneeling, lost in devout ecstasy,—an admirable figure, with slender form and bony, ascetic head. It would be difficult to imagine a greater contrast to this *cameriere*

*segreto* of Julius II. than the same Pope's librarian,—a big, fat man, with flat and placid face. With what ingenious art, however, has the painter given Inghirami an air of acuteness which is almost distinction, and has even turned a physical defect of his model—strabismus of the left eye—into a mental virtue,—an expression of concentrated thought! I speak, you must understand, of the picture preserved in the Casa Inghirami at Volterra; that of the Pitti is undoubtedly not a replica, but a copy made by some northern artist. Here in Rome we have still another representation of the same man, executed by an unknown painter, not a brilliant artist, but at least a contemporary. The stout librarian is here depicted in a remarkable scene and at a very critical moment of his life. Some day when you are at S. John Lateran, make them open for you the last room in the sacristy, and ask to be shown the 'Masaccio,' for they claim to possess a Masaccio—of the year 1516! The picture is a landscape, and of a kind very interesting for the period: at the right is the Colosseum; at the left, the Arch of Titus; in the foreground, an enormous wagon loaded with bags of flour and drawn by campagna buffaloes, which the drivers, with long goads, are trying to force backward. A little mule, comically foreshortened, is running away, towards the arch, while his stout rider, an ecclesiastic, thrown to the ground and caught under the wagon, shows only his chubby, dolorous face and two fat hands, one still holding the breviary! In the sky, above the Colosseum, appears in half-length the Christ, with S. Peter and S. Paul; and the inscription is as follows:

*Christo salvatori T. Phædrus tanto periculo ereptus.* In Valeriano's curious book, *On the Misfortunes of Learned Men*, you may read at length the story of this accident that happened one day on the Forum to the unfortunate Inghirami. He at first believed that he had suffered no real injury, and ordered his tragi-comic ex-voto for the Lateran, where he was canon; but not long after, he died, probably from the results of the shock.

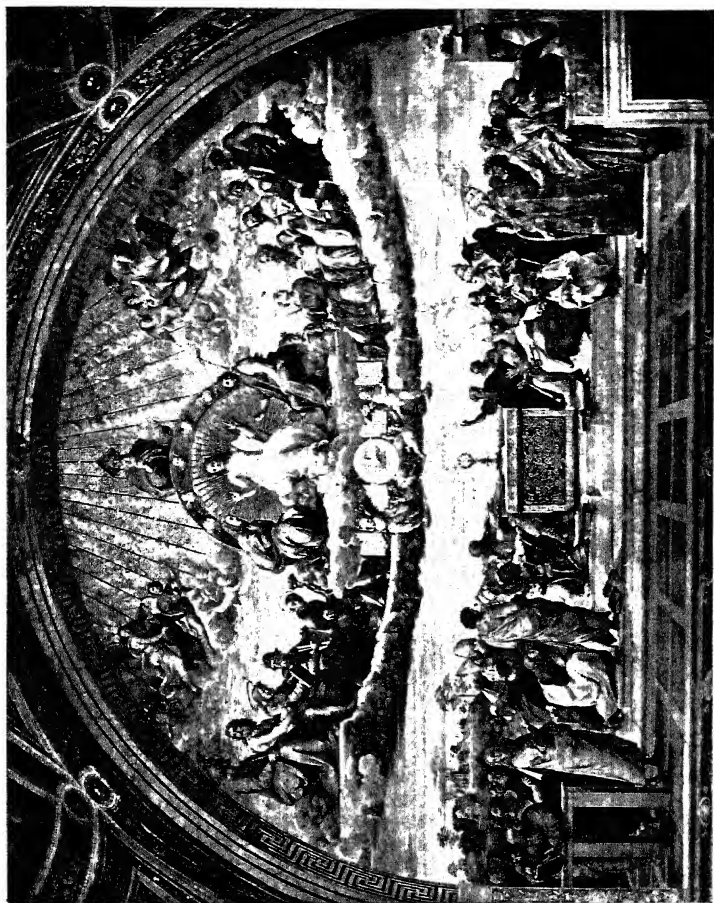
"I have wandered from our subject, drawn away by the name of the worthy canon, to whom we probably owe the Latin inscriptions in the background of these frescos. To return to the paintings: the more I study them and reflect upon the marvellous unity of thought which penetrates this vast whole even to its least details, the more I am convinced that a conception like this could never have come forth from any council whatever of 'suggesting' minds. It sprang from the fathomless depths of creative genius; it was inspired by the Divine breath: *Numine afflatus*<sup>1</sup>—is it not indeed the device, in the medallion above us, of that magnificent allegory in which Raffaello has represented Poetry and Art!"

"You will admit, however, monsignore," I said, "that the Segnatura holds a place apart, exceptional in Raffaello's art. The frescos there, before us, contrast so widely in conception and in aims with all else that Santi produced. These frescos speak not only to the senses and the imagination, like the master's other works; they solicit our intellectual faculties as well, they appeal to our knowledge of history and of letters, they invite us in distinct terms

<sup>1</sup> *Æneid*, vi., 50.











to construct and to divine. We are in presence of a scholarly and reflective art,—in a way, abstract,—I was about to say idealogic. Are we not justified then, in certain aspects, in seeing here an inspiration of scholars, men of thought and reflection ? ”

“ But why not rather an inspiration of Giotto, of Lorenzetti, and the other Trecentisti ? ”

I started slightly, with surprise and incredulity. The motion did not escape notice; my interlocutor smiled with an air of intelligence, and sinking into one of the chairs ranged in a row before the *Disputa*, he motioned me to take a seat beside him. Again he took out his fine snuff-box; he took snuff and used his big red silk handkerchief noisily; then, laying it, carefully unfolded, across his knees, he went on talking in his slow, persuasive voice:

## II

“ And why not, my dear sir? Our masters of the Trecento were well acquainted with this idealogic painting, as you have just called it; they practised it extensively, and often with incomparable splendour. Besides their themes from the Bible, the Apocalypse, the Apocryphal Gospels, and the legends of the Saints, those masters also delighted in exploring certain abstract notions, in inspiring themselves with some transcendent idea in religion, politics, or philosophy, and bringing it upon the scene and into action. Boldly, or naïvely, they mingled fiction and reality, allegorical figures and historic personages, in varied groups full of life and animation, thus composing vast pictures at once symbolic and dramatic, not unlike

those 'Moralties' of the mediæval stage which were developed side by side with 'Passions' and 'Mysteries' founded on the sacred books and legends of the saints. Still, I hasten to say that no one of these dramatic 'Moralties' approaches in depth and feeling the *Three Vows of S. Francis* in the lower church at Assisi, the masterly cycle of the *Seven Sacraments* in the Incoronata at Naples, or the impressive page of the *Triumph of Death* in the Campo Santo of Pisa. There is no problem so lofty and broad that the art of the fourteenth century did not attempt its interpretation, in its own fashion, in that synthetic, encyclopædic language which had become a current speech with generations nourished upon the *Speculum Majus* and the *Divina Commedia*. A whole universal history of civilisation may be read in that exquisite series of reliefs in the lower part of Giotto's Campanile which represent pastoral life, the cultivation of the ground, the culture of the grape, the forging of metals, navigation, war, the Christian virtues, works of charity, and so on. It is truly a course of lectures on politics and administration that you have in the three immense frescos of Ambrosio Lorenzetti in the council-hall at Siena. They instruct you as to the essential conditions of every well-ordered community; they show you here the idyllic felicities of a permanent and free government, and there the horrible calamities of anarchy and tyranny. Something very like the stately theme of the Segnatura even seems to have haunted those painters of the Spanish Chapel in Florence, when, in face of the Church, Militant and Triumphant, they called up the sciences of the

*trivium* and the *quadrivium*, with their most illustrious champions of antiquity,—Aristotle, Pythagoras, Ptolemy, and the others. A glance over the first chapters of Vasari—where on every page there is mention of works of this kind, now lost—will make very clear to you the importance and the wide diffusion of this form of painting in Italy before the epoch of Masaccio.

“A grand thought of the Trecento, put into visible shape with all the broad intelligence and the wealth of resource belonging to the high Renaissance, is the Segnatura of Raffaello. For it was the marvellous destiny of this man of genius to sum up in himself all the past of our Italian art, and to give to all its aspirations an harmonious and consummate expression. That symbolic and synthetic painting so dear to the generation of Giotto and Lorenzetti, neglected and left to become almost extinct—and naturally enough—by the vigorous naturalists of the fifteenth century, young Santi restored to life in this Stanza; he transfigured it, he breathed into it the powerful, generous vitality of his time, and clothed it in all the splendours of Christianity and of antiquity. He brings before us a great pageant of the human mind and its achievements in the regions of Faith and of Law, of Knowledge and of Imagination. And this theme—ideal and abstract, if ever such there were—he has handled with the perfection of technique which Masaccio’s and Piero della Francesca’s and Ghirlandaio’s magnificent school bequeathed him; with the serenity and sense of beauty which the models of the classic world taught him at Rome; with the mastery of composition which was his

own secret; and, finally, with the grace and fitness which were his native gifts.

“This sense of fitness, this exquisite good taste of Raffaello is manifest in the share which he assigns to each—the allegory and the historic scene—in the composition of this cycle. He does not confuse one with the other, like the painters of the fourteenth century; he does not mingle abstractions with drama, personifications with historic personages. His allegorical figures of Justice, Science, Theology, and Poetry are all here relegated to the ceiling, in great circles with gilded backgrounds, isolated and remote from the vast panorama over which, from the height of their thrones and from the midst of the clouds, they seem to preside. These paintings of the ceiling, it is very evident, preceded those of the walls; and it is most interesting to observe the rapid progress young Santi made from day to day, so to speak, and from one medallion to another. The figure of Justice has a character still entirely Peruginesque, and is indeed closely modelled upon that of the Cambio; her placid and candid air is not quite in harmony with the sword and scales that she holds in her hands. The artist, furthermore, felt the need of strengthening the frail conception by adding four delicious *putti*; but he did not fail to perceive that here were too many, and he reduced their number to two in the medallions following.

“A preoccupation with the classic model and with archæological details is but too visible in the second allegorical figure; nor can it be denied that the multi-coloured symbolism of the drapery, with its four staring colours (in











allusion to the four elements) is very harmful to the aspect of Science, whose head, nevertheless, is most attractive. But what a vision, at once gentle and powerful, is this Theology, a happy blending of the Umbrian type and the Florentine,—of the type of Perugino and of Fra Bartolommeo! Thus Beatrice appeared to her divine poet in the terrestrial Paradise: the *donna* 'veiled in white and girt with olive, with the green mantle and a robe the colour of living flame.' And as for Poetry, the antique Victory and the Christian Sibyl in one,—a woman of resplendent and ideal beauty, with great wide wings majestically displayed, the pure brow crowned with fresh laurel, the serene and limpid gaze searching far-off horizons,—all the world unites to salute in her one of the master's most sublime creations: this is the art of the immortal Urbinete in its fullest flower."

"After so finished a creation, how could it be that, in the *Disputa*, Raffaello again returned to his early manner, to the Umbrian tradition, and to reminiscences of San Severo?"

"Nothing is more natural. The *Disputa*, we must remember, my dear sir, is the religious fresco of the cycle, the sacred fresco,—thrice sacred, especially in its upper part, with the Church Triumphant and God Himself, the Trinity. It was with careful, deliberate intention that, for this supernatural world, the artist had recourse to the primitive style, consecrated by centuries of use, the canonical style, so to speak, of Christian painting. Very different, as you see, is the character of the lower part of the fresco. There is the Church Militant, whose

animated groups, expressive of various emotions, transport you at once into a region of life and reality,—the world of Masaccio, Ghirlandaio, Lionardo da Vinci. In meaning as in form, the *Disputa* is a dual work, to which the genius of Raffaello was able to give a marvellous unity,—a unity of aspect, notwithstanding its two styles; a unity of thought and composition, notwithstanding its two worlds.

“In its upper portion, the work recalls at all points those frequent representations of the Last Judgment by the older masters. At its summit, God the Father, in a diamond-shaped nimbus; below, the Holy Spirit as a dove; in the centre, the Christ, seated upon clouds, His bared breast and lifted hands marked with wounds; at the right, the Virgin Mary in prayer; opposite her S. John the Baptist, indicating with the finger Him whose forerunner he was; beneath, in semicircle, the great company of Heaven. Remark, however, the important change introduced here: instead of the traditional Twelve Apostles, who could not but be monotonous,—*povera cosa*, as Michelangelo said to Julius II.,—we have here the same number of representatives of the Old and the New Covenant, each of different expression and finely characteristic attitude. Adam, Abraham, Moses, David, Jeremiah, and Judas Maccabæus, alternate with S. Peter, S. Paul, S. James, S. John the Evangelist, S. Stephen, and S. Lawrence,—an imposing association of figures, representing the sequence of the generations from the first man and the first patriarch down to the first companions of the Christ and the first

martyrs of the new Law. Remark also the refined taste which, for the four symbolic beasts surrounding the Dove, has substituted four ravishing little winged messengers, who triumphantly hold up the four Gospels.

“ But the most original and captivating novelty is this vast galaxy overhead, pierced through with golden rays and veiled in light transparent vapours, where myriads of souls appear and vanish, rise and fall, hover and fly away,—kaleidoscopic, magical,—a ‘dissolving view’ of the empyrean. I have no recollection of anything like this, among preceding or contemporary works; Raffaello himself reproduced it but once afterwards, in the *Madonna di San Sisto*. And this vapoury background, sown with stars and with ‘divine butterflies’—to use Dante’s expression—is still further heightened in effect by an admirable group: on each side, three grand figures, of radiant beauty and brilliant colouring, come flying forward with the impetuous motion of antique Victories, with the motion almost of sacred Bacchantes—goddesses, you might call them, escaping from the adjacent *Parnasso*. All these ingenious and unforeseen things, all these fresh, luminous touches, contribute a serenity to the severe, hieratic aspect of these lofty regions and bring them nearer the vigorous tonality in which, beneath, is rendered the Church Militant, the assembly of the Faithful.

“ This assembly is supposed to occupy a vast hemisphere which represents the apse of the new S. Peter’s, at this time in process of construction. On the left, behind the figure which is a likeness of Bramante, there is visible

in the distance the scaffoldings of a *fabbrica*, with workmen carrying blocks of marble; on the other side, at the right, the mighty wall already is higher than a man's head; the altar, midway, bears the inscription: *Julius II. pontifex maximus*, and its isolated position, as well as its cubical form, suggests a foundation stone,—the one consecrated by the Rovere in the famous trench, the Saturday *in albis*, 1506. Among many valuable drawings of Raffaello, preserved at Windsor, and reproduced in the Braun photographs,<sup>1</sup> there is a design for this side of the *Disputa*, with the architectural portion much more developed, and showing still more clearly the intention,—a magnificent thought: the Holy Trinity, the whole heavenly host, and all the Christendom of the ages invoked to witness the great undertaking of Julius II.! It is not without interest to recall that in the famous fourteenth-century fresco of the Spanish Chapel at Florence, the Church Militant is also outlined against the imposing masses of a cathedral, also in process of construction, Santa Maria del Fiore. But here all comparison must stop between the story of the *cappellone*,—ingenious, episodic, *novelistic*,—and the sublime, inspired page of our Stanza:

“ ‘poema sacro,  
Al quale ha posto mano e cielo e terra . . .’

“Heaven and earth, the visible world and the supernatural, have rarely been brought together by a painter in the same setting without rending the picture and

<sup>1</sup> Windsor Castle, No. 159.

making it most incongruous; Raffaello himself, too, has more than once made shipwreck on these same shoals. See, for example, his *Coronation*, and his *Transfiguration*, here in the Gallery; in both of these works, you are forced to recognise the same 'solution of continuity'; in both is lacking the indispensable connecting link, so difficult to find, between the celestial vision above and the earthly scene below. But it is not lacking in the *Disputa*. The connecting link—and it is a stroke of genius whose power we can never sufficiently admire—is there, in that presence of the consecrated wafer upon the altar. The most august mystery of the Catholic faith here appears as the continuation and prolongation in straight, descending line, of the supreme mystery of the Holy Trinity in the upper part of the fresco; while, in horizontal line, it is the point of aim, the point of attraction, to all these groups of the Faithful; and is thus, in fact, the centre of the whole composition.

"The *Last Supper* of Lionardo da Vinci has been defined as 'the multiple effect of a word upon a company of men.' In the *Disputa* we have the multiple effect of a dogma upon an assembly of believers. It is a spiritual and mystic symphony, whose fundamental harmony is given by the four figures nearest the altar,—the four great Doctors of the Church. Saint Gregory contemplates the mystery in happy quietude; Saint Jerome is absorbed in meditation upon a sacred text which refers to it; Saint Ambrose is completely lost in ecstasy; while Saint Augustine is sufficiently master of himself and of the subject to dictate considerations upon it to a young man seated at his

feet. These four notes—faith, research, enthusiasm, and doctrinal exposition—are repeated and reverberated, in varied degrees and with infinite shadings, in the rest of the assemblage,—composed of Popes and bishops, priests and laymen, men of every age and every station. Do not seek to know their names; since the painter has indicated only the four Doctors, and with them Saint Thomas Aquinas and Saint Bonaventura, by inscriptions within their aureoles, do not go beyond his intentions, nor essay, following a misleading criticism, to identify the different figures by inductions and abstruse hypotheses.<sup>1</sup> Content yourself with studying their varied attitudes and expressions, and obtaining a clear idea of the thoughts and sentiments which animate each. Observe the splendid gesture of the man facing Saint Ambrose, or of that other, who is leaning over Saint Jerome; observe especially those three young men bending behind the chair of Saint Gregory,—the most admirable group of all, in my judgment. Raffaello borrows, it has been very justly remarked, the idea of this group from the *Adoration* of Lionardo, in the Uffizi; but how its effect is heightened, and how much more impressive it is made merely by the surroundings in which he has placed it! In the midst of an assembly of so many and so important personages who scrutinise and discuss, who acquiesce, or who hesitate,—these three young men make no question whatever; they do not

<sup>1</sup>The Pope who is standing behind Saint Bonaventura is not (as has been generally believed), Innocent III., but none other than Sixtus IV., the author of the book *De Sanguine Christi*, and the uncle of Julius II. Compare the Sixtus IV. in Melozzo's fresco.

argue, they do not even turn their eyes, but adore, silently and humbly, in the simplicity of their hearts: and, moreover, they are the only figures kneeling in the whole assemblage!

“ Follow, too, from the centre—the altar—the modulations and undulations of the sacred hymn, till it exhales its last breath on the two sides of the fresco: at these limits you will see the very characteristic and well-known heads of Fra Angelico, of Dante, and of Savonarola. The introduction here of the most mystic of painters and the most devout of poets has no need of commentary; I will but note a certain warning given by Dante in the opening of the *Paradiso* that those only ‘ will be able to follow his furrow upon the high sea who have very early stretched out their necks for angels’ food, that bread on which they feed here, and are never satiated.’<sup>1</sup> It may be that Savonarola owed his brilliant rehabilitation in the abode of the Popes, ten years after his condemnation to death as a heretic, mainly to the hatred of Julius II. for his predecessor, the Borgias<sup>2</sup>; but the determining reason with the artist was, without doubt, the exceptional

<sup>1</sup> “ *Voi altri pochi, che drizzaste il collo  
Per tempo al pan degli angeli, del quale  
Vinesi qui, ma non sen vien satollo,  
Metter potete ben per l’ alto sale  
Vostro navigio, servando mio solco.*”

*Parad.*, ii., 10-15.

<sup>2</sup> Let us note that the inquisitors sent by Alexander VI. to Florence for the trial of Savonarola repeatedly questioned the delinquent as to his relations with the Cardinal San Pietro in Vincoli (the future Pope, Julius II., at that time a fugitive in France). But the prior of San Marco never acknowledged these relations. See Villari, *Savonarola*, chap. vii., *passim*.



devotion of the martyr to the Holy Sacrament,—a fact which had so notable a part in the final tragedy of 1498. For it is evident that a reputation for this devotion determined the selection of the persons represented in the lower portion of the *Disputa*; else why Saint Thomas Aquinas and Saint Bonaventura, and not Saint Dominic and Saint Francis of Assisi?

“But a very strange idea, after all, it was,—to make a mystic dogma the pivot of an animated scene, and to gather all the personages of the drama around an insoluble mystery! But it is the year 1509, and less than two lustra separate us from the theses of Wittenberg. Before his death Raffaello was destined to hear the distant mutterings of a tempest let loose in the north against this Basilica of S. Peter’s, whose future splendours he had announced, and against this very monstrance with the Host, to which he owed one of his happiest inspirations. This central point of the *Disputa* was to become the central point of all the disputes of the century, of its controversies, its strifes, its inexpiable wars; and soon the world was to be—and was to remain, alas!—divided into two camps, confessing or denying the mystery of transubstantiation. I cannot but recognise,” said the canon of S. Peter’s, “a sign of the times in this sacred fresco of the Segnatura, and see something providential in the fact that, on the very eve of the catastrophe, on the very threshold of the Reformation, Christian art should thus boldly affirm a doctrine so soon to be menaced, and should glorify it by the world’s greatest genius in its most splendid sanctuary!”









III

"Is not this also a sign of the times, monsignore," I said, "this *School of Athens* on the wall opposite? Thus facing the sacred and mystic painting of the *Disputa*, does not this luminous secular page announce another and a contrary principle? To exalt science and philosophy to a level with religion and its divine mysteries,—to exalt Aristotle and Plato to a level with the Doctors of the Church,—how new and daring the idea! It seems like a declaration of the rights of the human reason as opposed to the omnipotence of dogma."

"But, my dear sir, in Giotto's Campanile, are there not the Seven Disciplines of Science at the side of the Seven Sacraments and the Seven Beatitudes? In the Spanish Chapel, are not the great sages of antiquity placed on a level with Saint Augustine, Saint Jerome, and Saint John Damascenus? Why credit Raffaello with an act of 'daring,' which was nothing of the kind, and, in any case, was no invention of his?"

There was much vivacity, not to say irritation, in the worthy canon's retort; but, turning immediately towards the fresco which I had so unfortunately interpreted, he resumed more calmly and with a tone of indulgent irony:

"Ah! if the visitors of the Stanze would kindly leave outside, with their sticks and umbrellas, certain ideas of their period! This century has so formed the habit of regarding reason as opposed to faith—of considering philosophy as the declared enemy of religion—that it cannot look at past phenomena in any other way than

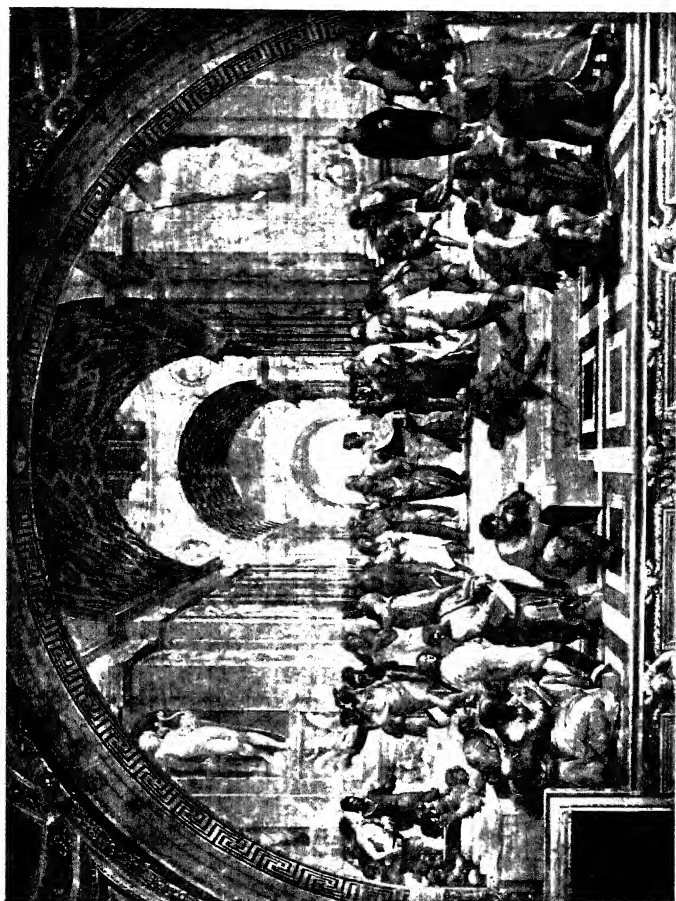
through this deceptive medium. They have already 'constructed' for us a Dante torn by philosophic doubts: a Dante even 'heretical, revolutionary, and socialist,' and here are you on the way to construct for us a 'free-thinking' Raffaello! My dear sir, you are mistaken; it is by no means the haughty and presuming science of our time that young Santi proposed to honour on these walls; it is the scholastic science of his time which he glorifies,—the science of the *trivium* and *quadrivium*; the seven 'Liberal Arts,' or 'Disciplines,'—namely, grammar, rhetoric, and dialectics, the *trivium*; music, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy, the *quadrivium*.

"This was a theme very old even in Raffaello's day, very well known to our artists; and it is interesting to follow its development from the thirteenth century to Raffaello's own time. Upon the famous pulpit of the Cathedral of Siena, as well as upon the great fountain in Perugia, Niccolà Pisano has represented the Seven Disciplines of the *trivium* and *quadrivium* in allegorical female figures with various emblems. In Giotto's Campanile of the century following, instead of allegorical figures there are Greek and Roman personages who represent the Liberal Arts in action. A little later than this, in the Spanish Chapel, the two systems are combined: the allegorical figures are enthroned with their emblems in splendid niches, and at the feet of each is seated a sage of ancient times, fantastically attired; the astronomer Ptolemy, among others,—confused with one of the kings of the same name,—gallantly wears the other's crown; and this amusing mistake is perpetuated by Melozzo da Forlì, and even











by Raffaello in the fresco before us. Of that series of pictures having for their subjects the Seven Liberal Arts that Melozzo composed for the library of Federico da Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino, four remain to us, and are divided between the galleries of London and Berlin. There is always the combination originated by the painter of the *capellone*,—a Science seated upon her throne, and an adept in gorgeous attire at her feet, or, rather, kneeling before her on the steps of the throne; the background, however, is here a stately building, and the adept represents some contemporary prince: the devotee who kneels before Dialectics is Duke Federico in person! Finally, the Hall of the Classics so called, in the *appartamento Borgia* here in the Vatican, forms the last link of the chain extending from the Siennese Cathedral to the Stanza della Segnatura. The cycle of the Seven Disciplines, painted in this Hall of the Classics by Pinturicchio, does not materially differ from the received type; but each figure has for background a very extensive portico or landscape, and is surrounded by a great number of persons—masters, disciples, and men of various conditions; in the train of Geometry there is even a turbaned figure—which seems to be a generous allusion to the services rendered us in this branch of knowledge by the followers of Mohammed.

“To conclude this rapid survey, a word as to the attributes by which all these predecessors of Raffaello have sought to characterise the different sciences. Astronomy is almost always represented with a globe; Geometry, with a compass, a square, or a disk; Music with a harp, an organ, a viol, or some other instrument; Arithmetic, with

an abacus, the Pythagorean table; Grammar is accompanied by a child, or perhaps several children. Besides these clear and expressive attributes, there are others whose meaning is less evident: a cornucopia or a pair of serpents designates Dialectics; Rhetoric wears a laurel wreath, or is armed with a sword; often she holds a book or a roll. These two sciences, being especially abstract, present almost insuperable difficulties to any attempt at characterisation; and Raffaello himself experienced this, especially as regards Rhetoric.

“For—as judicious observers have already had occasion to remark—while eliminating from his grand composition thrones and personifications, allegories and symbols, and making a vivid dramatic picture of human knowledge, the Urbinate painter has, nevertheless, conceived of this knowledge, according to the ideas current in his time, as *trivium* and *quadrivium*, and has sought to make its seven traditional parts distinct and recognisable. On the left, quite on the edge of the picture, an old man with a child, a youth, and a man in mature life, gathered about an open book lying on a pedestal, form the division of Grammar. Those of Arithmetic and of Music come next, in the foreground and lower down. Raffaello has ingeniously taken advantage of the already consecrated figure of Pythagoras to associate together the two sister sciences. Did not the Samian philosopher say that all the universe was harmony and number? And, moreover, Boëtius, the special legislator of the Seven Disciplines, taught that music became a science only through its relations to the science of numbers. Accordingly it is not the simple











abacus which serves as attribute here; the young man kneeling before the sage of Crotona presents to him the harmonic table, with the signs of the scale, and the 'divine' figures of the decad. The man in a turban leaning over Pythagoras is a feature borrowed from Pinturicchio, indicating the Arab share in mathematical studies. On the opposite side, at the right, you see Geometry and Astronomy. The famous group in which Archimedes or Euclid, with the features of Bramante, designs with his compass triangles upon a slate, speaks very clearly. Nor can any doubt exist as to the two sages who stand behind this group, and of whom one holds a terrestrial globe and the other a starry sphere. Ptolemy is revealed by his usurped crown, while the face, as well as the Oriental costume of his companion—Vasari's Zoroaster—directs our thoughts to the Chaldeans and Babylonians who were the first to understand the movement of the celestial bodies. On the other hand, and for reasons which I have already had the honour of indicating to you, it is not so easy to recognise Rhetoric in this imposing personage—perhaps Demosthenes—seated quite in the centre of the foreground, isolated, absorbed in thought, and negligently tracing characters upon a leaf of papyrus. After reflection, however, you will say at last that this was the only way to represent in painting the science of letters and of eloquence. Raffaello himself seems to have hesitated long before this arduous problem, and to have decided only at the last moment, for this figure, from every point of view important, is still lacking in the splendid cartoon of our fresco which is preserved in the Ambrosian Library

in Milan. As for Dialectics, that science has been represented here with a felicity and a daring equally to be admired: this first of sciences—*disciplina disciplinarum*, as it was called at that time—occupies the whole upper part of the composition, and gives us the brilliant spectacle of the chief philosophic systems of antiquity.

“Do not make the mistake of supposing, with so many commentators, that Raffaello designed to give here a complete and consecutive history of Greek speculation; you can leave pedants and their dusty folios alone in the presence of our fresco. To understand this marvellous composition and enjoy it as the work of art that it is, the current erudition of the average mortal is enough; the painter himself was satisfied with this. Plato and Aristotle are already designated by the titles of the books they hold, and you will scarcely go wrong in saluting as the disciples of the Academy and the Lyceum the groups attendant upon each side of these masters. Farther away, at the left, Socrates with his Silenus-masque, is making one of his persuasive demonstrations to a little group such as he loved to gather about him in the Athenian market-place—some townsfolk or artisans, a beautiful *ephebos*, a splendid warrior, who is doubtless Alkibiades. Opposite, on the temple-steps, that is Diogenes who sits idly in the sun, covered with rags, an object of ridicule to the two Epicureans above him,—one robed and curled with all the elegance of a fop, the other older, and of a type notably sensual. Behind them, leaning against the plinth of a great pillar, some follower of Pyrrho, contemplates with a mocking smile the good young man—in a

most inconvenient posture—eagerly taking notes, and manifestly determined not to lose a single word of the master. If, with certain authors, you incline to recognise in this eager youth a delightful representative of Eclecticism, I should offer no objection; and I would unreservedly approve if you designate as a Stoic this haughty old man who stands near by, finely draped in his toga, his isolation, and his pride. On the same level, but more in shadow, you see advancing an aged pilgrim, staff in hand, with long beard and sacerdotal dress. Him you may take, if you like, for one of the half-mythical, legendary sages of Greece, a Thales or a Bias, returning from the banks of the Nile or the Euphrates.

“Much farther than this, however, I would not advise you to go in your identifications. In regard to the *School of Athens*, as in regard to the *Disputa*, I should always say, no matter about names; study the personages in themselves, in their expressions, in their movements, in their relations to each other, and in their contrasts. What a type of intellectual concentration is this Pythagoras with his formidable cranium, and how subtly diversified are the attitudes of those who stand around him! The old man, trying to look over and copy what the great teacher is writing in his book, long ago excited Vasari’s admiration: ‘He stretches out his head and his chin,’ says Vasari, ‘as if he would thus make his pen larger and longer.’

“Still more famous has always been the group representing Geometry,—the four youths leaning over the problem which the master’s compass is tracing for them. For this

ravishing *quatuor*, Raffaello, it is true, borrowed Giotto's idea in the *Ascension of S. John*, in Santa Croce; but though the *motif* of mimic gradation is the same with the pupils of Archimedes and the disciples regarding the empty tomb of the Apostle, the composition here is far more balanced and harmonious than in the Peruzzi chapel,—not to speak of the grace and beauty of all these adolescent figures and the masterly drawing and foreshortening of the old master making his demonstration.

“ In the third and principal group, that of Socrates, observe the play of expression so varied among the different auditors,—from Alkibiades in his glittering armour to the old fellow peering from under his enormous cap; note also the familiar and expressive gesture, the garb, poor, and yet so noble, the captivating ugliness of the great ‘midwife of minds’; and by no means overlook that solemn, morose personage, wrapped in his large bordered mantle, standing behind the popular philosopher, not very much pleased with the discourse,—a sophist, it may be. Also that other popular philosopher, a Socrates gone astray, a sage not even of the street, but of the gutter, who does what pleases him without regard to the rest of the world! To appreciate the striking originality of this conception of Diogenes, it is useful to refer to the Ambrosian cartoon: the fresco, deplorably injured in this portion, gives but a feeble idea of the Cynic, as Santi imagined him and as he so finely placed him in contrast with the two Epicureans—he, despising the joys and the goods of earth, and they, making pleasure the supreme end of life, mutually relieve and set off each other!











“An intention no less subtle has brought together near by, into the same episode, the sceptic and the eclectic,—certainly one of the most animated and charming bits of byplay in the whole immense drama. And do you see, also, how much the Pyrrhonist resembles our excellent friend M. de Voltaire? He has the Frenchman’s features, his *ricтус*, his wig, and even his long, meagre, bent figure! After contemplating this sceptical head, it is a pleasure to return to the disciples of the Academy and the Lyceum and read in their faces the admiration, the respect, the gratitude, they feel towards their masters. And what can we say of these two masters themselves, placed in the centre of the vast composition, and giving the leading thought of the work! Young, robust, his features bearing the stamp of a certain positivism, if I may use the word, Aristotle points downwards to the ground; while Plato, with lighted brow, with mien of poet and prophet, raises his hand towards the sky. One appeals to the experimental method and to analysis; the other, to intuition and synthesis; they indicate the two aspects of the human mind, the two poles of Greek philosophy,—indeed, of all philosophy.

“And, in truth, with the mind’s incessant labour to know the reason of things,—*causarum cognitio*, as the inscription above our fresco phrases it,—we must forever turn from Aristotle to Plato, from Plato to Aristotle, never resting definitively in one or the other of the two systems. *Corsi, ricorsi*, says Giambattista Vico; we move in a spiral, but for all that it is a circle still, and the *ritorno al segno* constant and periodic. In the heroic age

of Christian philosophy, in the time of S. Augustine and S. Ambrose, the ideas of Plato dominated the world and inspired all speculation. With the development of scholasticism the categories of the Lyceum came into honour, and Aristotle was the *maestro di color che sanno*. The principles of the Academy regained their vogue at the close of the mediæval period, and exercised an extraordinary fascination over the world of the *Rinascimento*; but the inductive method of the Stagyrte regained supremacy in the teachings of the Jesuits and the doctrines of Bacon. The alternation of the two currents of thought might be traced down to the present moment; but I like much better to call your attention to the marvellous equity with which Raffaello, in the *School of Athens*, held the balance equal between the author of the *Timaios* and the author of the *Ethics*, notwithstanding the predominance of Platonism at the dawn of the Cinquecento and the general disfavour, at the moment, of the Peripatetic philosopher. Thus art showed itself more philosophic here than the philosophy in fashion, the victorious system of the day! Nor should we wonder. For is it not the true mission of art to reconcile reality and the ideal,—to unite analysis and synthesis? Are not Aristotle and Plato side by side as representatives of the *disciplina disciplinarum* on Giotto's Campanile, and in pictures of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries?

“But never was this union of the two masters proclaimed with so much power and splendour as in the painting of the Segnatura: they are presented before us, there, each in his legitimate and sovereign right. If a









the side of one you see the statue of Apollo, at the side of the other is that of Minerva ; they are on the same plane, relieved against the same blue and limpid sky ; they teach in the same temple, and that temple is the S. Peter's of the future ! The new Basilica, whose earliest foundations only are visible in the *Disputa*, here is complete in its decorated interior, as Bramante conceived it and as he himself drew it, Vasari tells us, for his young compatriot. Magnificent in its picturesque perspective, the *School of Athens* is still nobler in its moral perspective: the grand thought, or, if you prefer, the grand Utopia of the Renaissance, is all depicted here ! ”

## IV

“ Oh, the radiant painting ! ” the canon said at last, after he had looked long and silently at the *Parnassus*, to which, leaning on my arm, he had led me. “ The delicious, radiant painting—all grace, distinction, poetry ! The sky—unhappily now so injured—still has some traces of its original blue ; rocks, verdure, the springing fountain and the laurel grove refresh a man's very soul with whiffs of coolness ! And observe the splendid, beautiful figures, scattered, not grouped, as they exchange words or looks, or else recline in attitudes of ineffable gentleness and repose ! Observe Sappho, in her sinuous pose on the hill-slope. Notice the three Pierides, standing near Apollo, so gracefully intertwined, the head of one resting on her sister's shoulder ! The pose is a reminiscence of Giotto in his *Herod's Banquet* of the Peruzzi chapel, be it noted in passing. In this enchanting composition, you must not



expect to find the masterly ordering, the imposing contrasts, the marvellous expressiveness of the *Disputa* or of the *School of Athens*. Quitting the heights of Theology and Philosophy for this wooded and flowery vale of the Muses, Raffaello seems to give free scope to his artistic fancy, evoking no other images than those which shall delight the eye. For all that, he has written here a great page of history, depicted from life one of the essential sides of a memorable epoch. He makes us feel how well this high Renaissance understood the sweetness of life, of this new upspringing of life which gave its name to the epoch!

“ You remember Mantegna’s *Parnassus*, in the Louvre, one of the most charming late fifteenth-century reproductions of a mythological subject? In front of a rocky cave the nine Muses are dancing to the sound of Apollo’s lyre; opposite, at the right, Mercury leans upon a Pegasus with wide-spread wings, a magnificent conception; on the rock, above the grotto, Venus, standing at the foot of her couch, receives the farewell of Mars; while, a few steps distant, the mischievous Cupid aims a pea-shooter at Vulcan, who is coming out from his smithy below in a great rage. Contrast that dream of springtime, that fairy tale of the great Paduan, with Raffaello’s fresco,—only fifteen or twenty years later in date. There are no dreams, no fairy tales in the *Parnassus* of the Urbinate: the mythological world is there in its reality, or, to speak more accurately, it is the real world of the painter’s time, it is his own generation quite at home and in its element in this golden age once again upon the earth — *Astræa redux*! Do you think it is the Greek









Olympus, this hill in the picture? Is it not rather some familiar Italian garden, with its successive terraces and artificial rockwork? The guests in this enchanted country are the very same *donne e cavalieri* who take the air in the groves of the castle of Urbino, the castle of Ferrara, the villa of the Queen of Cyprus, conversing gently on the two great topics of the day, *amor e cortesia*. It would be like a chapter from the *Asolani* of Bembo or Castiglione's *Cortegiano*, were it not for that blind, inspired old man at the left, who, far more than Apollo, dominates all the picture and gives it a truly divine radiance. It is the clarion of the Iliad, ringing out in the midst of the *Decameron*—which seems to be but little moved by it, however!

“What a figure this Homer is! How grand the gesture and expression! Of stature almost colossal, his face marvellously lighted up by the very darkness which veils his eyes, the Ionian singer comes forward; he intones one of his immortal rhapsodies. The young man who is transcribing his winged words—compare him with the eclectic philosopher on one wall and the youth writing from the dictation of S. Augustine on the other—forgets himself and stops, carried away by his enthusiasm; and Apollo, even, lifts his eyes in rapture, while he accompanies with his violin the old man's voice. For he does accompany Homer, do you see? This accounts for the violin, which has offended so many people, and given rise to so many attempts at explanation. An instrument whose strings are touched by the fingers—an instrument like the lyre—would not so well have marked the intimate and

continuous association of sound, the august *unisono* with which the god of music honours

*'l' altissimo poeta*

*Che sovra gli altri com' aquila vola.*

*Che le Muse lattâr più ch' altro mai.'*

“Behind the singer of the Iliad you perceive Dante, preceded by Vergil and another poet, supposed, by some, to be Raffaello himself—an idea simply absurd; the painter would never have represented himself in company like this, and laurel-crowned besides! I would suggest—very tentatively—the name of Statius, the author of the *Thebaid*, and Dante's second companion in his mystic journey. But in fact, Homer, Vergil, Dante, and Sappho excepted, all the other indications given us by Vasari, or proposed by modern writers, cannot be depended upon; the only thing certain is, that Raffaello intended to give a place in his *Parnasso* to a sufficient number of ancient and modern poets without paying much attention to the history of literature, or even caring overmuch for iconic fidelity. We may leave, for those who enjoy it, the attempt to identify the Anacreon, the Corinna, the Sannazaro, and the Tebaldeo; and also to discover what particular antique statues and bas-reliefs the painter studied for this fresco. It would be an interesting research, if only the results of it were more convincing! As for me, I cannot recognise Ariadne in the Muse at Apollo's right, nor Laocoon in this head of Homer all aglow with *furor divinus*: the grand original drawing of this head in the Windsor collection reproduced in the

Braun photographs, fails entirely to support that conjecture. That the classic world had constantly more and more influence upon Raffaello as he went on with his work in this Stanza, can scarcely be doubted, but the development seems to me far more apparent in the general conceptions of the figures than in any borrowing of special details. No one, so far as I know, has as yet discovered the classic models of the three allegorical figures, Strength, Justice, and Moderation; and still they are, of all the paintings of the Segnatura, those in which the classic influence is most conspicuous.

“ Our Christian art has rarely been happy in the isolated representation of virtues, vices, and other moral, abstract ideas. It has never had at its disposal—as Greek art had—a luxuriant mythology, rich in varied types, consecrated by devotion and poetry, and for ages making part of the general knowledge of the people. Our painters and sculptors have been obliged to draw upon their own resources, invent popular notions, so to speak, imagine emblems more or less significant, and it is not strange that they have often fallen into the equivocal and the fine-spun. For instance, to characterise Moderation—*Temperantia*—they place in her hands two vases of unequal size and of different contents: it is understood by this that she mingles and dilutes a beverage—‘ puts water with her wine,’ as the French say. Vanucci in the Cambio, and Sansovino at Santa Maria del Popolo, did not scruple to employ this absurd *motif*. But Giotto in the Arena Chapel, and Andrea del Pisano in the reliefs of the Battisterio found inspirations both strong and



beautiful for some of the Christian virtues, and, as I look at this fourth great fresco of the Segnatura, I do not hesitate to class Raffaello, in this respect, with Giotto and Pisano.

“It is by their individuality much more than by any insignia that Raffaello sought to characterise the three Cardinal Virtues which accompany Justice. The *Fortitudo* is like one of those stately figures of which Michelangelo had the secret. If she had no casque or cuirass or *cnemides*, no lion upon which she leans—we should know her still for the personification of Strength. Instead of the lance, she holds in her right hand a vigorous branch of oak,—the oak of the della Rovere; and the baby genius, climbing merrily over her to gather the fruit of the branch, adds to the conception a delicate and touching trait—it is not a brutal strength, this *Fortitudo*, but a beneficent strength. The *Temperantia* on the other side, with her languid eyes, her neck slightly bent, and her gentle head modestly wrapped with a kerchief, leads our thoughts at once to the Marys, *gratiæ plenæ*, of the Umbrian School. Moderation, as the attendant upon Justice, is much the same as Clemency; hence the little genius at her left points a finger upwards, as if to the source of all mercy. For attribute, the *Temperantia* holds a bridle,—an emblem often employed, less grotesque than the two vases of water and wine, though specious, however; but with what dainty art the painter has curved this bridle, and made it a line of beauty!

“The *Prudentia* in the centre surpasses the other two figures, both in height, because her seat is more lofty,









and also in the noble seriousness of her face. Vanucci, in the Cambio, has given this Virtue a caduceus, with four mirrors around it,—a symbol of the circumspect mind that looks in all directions: Perugino's pupil still kept the intention of his master, but modified it in a most ingenious manner. His *Prudentia* has a Janus head, but the second face is an antique mask, very skilfully arranged in the coiffure; she has also two delicious *putti* in her service,—one presents a mirror in front; the other, behind her, holds up a torch as high as the mask.

“At the same time, far above all these subtilties of thought which are the special gratification of an enlightened public, I place, it is needless to say, the truly artistic qualities of this enchanting painter,—the amplitude or grace of the figures, the harmony of the lines, the rhythmic order of the composition. And since we are here by ourselves, and I can depend upon your discretion, I will confide to you, as a great secret, that I much prefer the *Virtues* of our Stanza to the famous *Sibyls* of the Pace, which they resemble in so many respects, while far surpassing them in simplicity and charm.

“The question is very often asked why Raffaello, on this fourth wall of the Segnatura, interrupted the series of his great historic compositions and did not give us that assembly of legislators which would have been the appropriate sequence to the theologians, philosophers, and poets of the other walls. The clever explanation has been offered that it would have been impossible to represent in a picture an assembly of jurists without their having an air of being very much bored and very impatient to

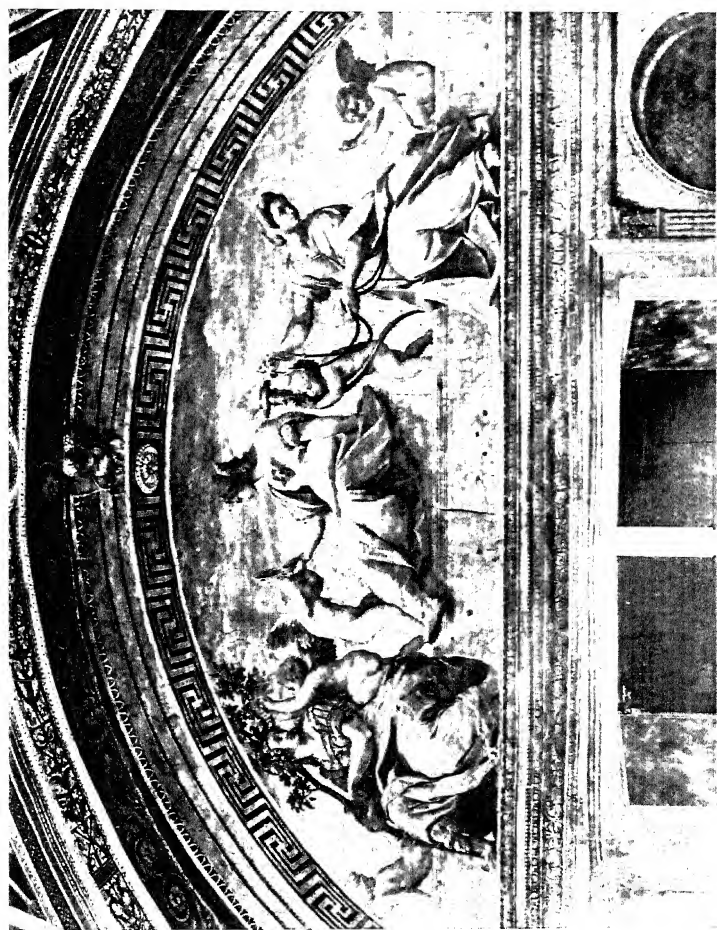
have dinner announced! I think, however, the creator of the *Disputa* and the *School of Athens* might have been able to get over this difficulty! The real explanation you will find, it seems to me, if you remember that we are here in the *Camera Segnatura*, a high court-room, and that cardinal virtues traditionally belong in such a place. In the *Cambio* they are depicted on the wall directly opposite the judges' seat; here, where the members of the tribunal would be seated parallel to the two long sides of the Stanza, the usual allegorical figures have the place of honour where most in sight, that is to say, immediately under the great medallion of *Justice*. For the historic composition, there remained, therefore, only the narrow, lower compartments near the window; and here Raffaello represents the two great codes of Roman Law and of Canon Law, which form the foundations of the social order of Europe. He treated in the style of an antique bas-relief the Emperor Justinian delivering the Pandects to the legists of his court; for Gregory IX. proclaiming the Decretals, he followed the idea of Melozzo da Forlì's magnificent painting now in the picture-gallery of the Vatican, and he gave to that celebrated adversary of the Hohenstaufen the face and figure of Julius II.

“Previously to this, upon the other three walls, the young Urbinate, following so many distinguished examples of the Quattrocento, had taken pleasure in depicting various iconic figures and mingling among the personages of other times a number of his own contemporaries,—Bramante, the Duke of Urbino, the young Federico Gonzaga, Perugino, and others,—not omitting himself.











In this fresco of the *Decretals*,—and evidently as influenced by Melozzo's work representing Sixtus IV. founding the Vatican Library,—Raffaello painted only portraits,—only his own contemporaries. The future Pope, Leo X., is manifestly the cardinal at Julius II.'s right; and the future Paul III. Farnese is the last in the group on that side. Were it not that the question of date confuses me, and that Giulio de' Medici, who later was Clement VII., at this time had not yet received the purple, I should not hesitate thus to identify the prelate on the opposite side who supports the *pluviale* of Julius II.; for he recalls, beyond all doubt, the authentic portrait that Raffaello has left us of Giulio de' Medici, in the famous picture of the Pitti! And so the painter, in 1511, would have shown in a prophetic frame, as in a Banquo's mirror, the Rovere on the throne, and the three pontiffs who were to come after him!

“However this may be, all the figures in this fresco have a stamp of reality and fidelity to life which is extremely remarkable. It is also surprising to what a degree certain of these types are perpetuated to our own time. The head next to my problematic prelate has the Napoleonic masque strikingly exact; and I have often said to our dear Commendatore de Rossi, the famous author of *Roma sotterranea*, that he only needed to let his beard grow to be a very counterpart of the *avvocato consistoriale*, who is receiving on his knees the papal benediction. Only the figure of Julius himself—strange to say, at first thought—lacks relief and prestige. A first look at the *Decretals* must be to any one a disappointment in

this respect. The picture corresponds very poorly to the idea we form of the *pontefice terribile*, the fiery-souled priest, who projected and executed so many great things. It represents an old man, feeble, depressed, almost sinking out of life.

“ But it was, in fact, at the most critical, the most distressed period of his long life, that the Ligurian Pope posed here for his artist, in the month of July, 1511. He had just been driven out of Bologna, betrayed by his dearest nephew, torn with grief by the murder of his favourite Alidosi, humiliated by Louis XII. and Maximilian, who had decided on having him deposed and had called a council against him at Pisa. The following month he fell ill ; every one expected his death, and the Roman nobles went up to the Capitol to proclaim the Republic. It is well known how the wounded lion suddenly rallied, with all his former vigour; how he faced the storm, and came out victorious in the year 1512. You will find the ‘ lion ’ in Raffaello’s two portraits of him of this same year 1512, in the adjacent Stanza. He is there in the *Mass of Bolsena*, and, especially, in the *Expulsion of Heliodorus*.

“ You will not ask me to go into details as to the *Pro-mulgation of the Pandects* : we are in the presence of a total wreck, and the only thing to note is this intention of a Roman bas-relief, of which I have already spoken. Still, I do not say to you: *Guarda e passa* ; on the contrary, I invite you to ask yourself, now and here, a most disturbing and grievous question, and one which has never yet been frankly dealt with. What remains to us, in reality,

of Raffaello's work,—of the work of his own hand,—in the Camera della Segnatura?

“Seven years after Santi's death, the hordes of the Constable Bourbon invaded this Stanza: they destroyed the marquetry of Giovanni da Verona, they broke the painted glass of Guillaume de Marsillat, they lighted a fire here to warm themselves—in the month of May!—and it is easy to imagine the condition of the frescos, after a visit like this. ‘Who is the presumptuous and ignorant man who has daubed these faces?’<sup>1</sup> here on this spot Titian asked of Sebastian del Piombo, without any idea that he was speaking to the ‘restorer’ in person. Alas! these walls have known, since then, more than one *imbrattatore*, and of less conscience than Fra Sebastiano. I do not doubt the sincerity of Carlo Maratta, when he speaks of his worship of Raffaello; but my heart is heavy whenever I re-read the *Memorie* of his pupil Urbani concerning the *risarcimenti* which his master executed in the Stanza, and concerning the famous ‘Greek wine’ with which such marvels of cleaning were wrought. In looking over Goethe's *Italienische Reise* not long since, I was struck with his lamentations over the ‘filthy’ condition of the paintings of our Camera. They have no such aspect now; hence they have been again ‘restored’ since Goethe's time,—since 1787, probably at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and this time quite privately, quite as a family affair, since there is no official record on the subject!

<sup>1</sup> “Gli domandò chi era stato quel presuntuoso ed ignorante chi havera *imbrattati* quei volti.”—Lod. Dolce, *Dialogo della Pittura*, 1557.

“Do not therefore wonder if the Diogenes of the Ambrosian cartoon, or the Homer in the drawing at Windsor Castle, defy all comparison with the Segnatura as we see it; for it is only across *risarcimenti* and *imbrattature* repeated from century to century, that the genius of the divine Santi appears to us in this place: *Stat magni Numinis umbra!*

“Nevertheless, there yet remains enough of his drawing and his composition to give us a glimpse of the ideal which the loftiest minds of the Renaissance believed themselves to be pursuing, at that memorable epoch,—an ideal which these frescos sought to glorify,—the imposing ideal of something like a universal harmony, embracing the classic world and the Catholic world, religion and philosophy, the Church and the State, the devout life and the life of pleasure! It was a dream, I know; and the awaking that followed was fearful; even, it may have been a great and culpable error (many good men so regard it at the present day); none the less, the dream was sublime, and the error was a very generous one: *felix culpa!* And when I think that at this very moment, in these same years 1509-11, when Raffaello was at work upon this enchanting cycle of the Segnatura, another man of genius, a very Titan, hanging from a vault not far from these ‘Upper Rooms,’ was depicting there the Creation of Man, and making Sibyls and Prophets speak! Yes, truly, it was a great epoch, the epoch of the *pontefice terribile*.

“But how long we have been talking! It is time to stop. You will make me again miss the service in the











Capella del Coro. Adieu, my dear sir, or, rather, *au revoir* ! Come often to our Segnatura, and try to look at these paintings with the eyes of a man of the Cinquecento. When you come here, be a little doubtful of the current ideas of our day—and, above all, beware of innovators! ”

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE WORLD'S GAME (1509-1512)

#### I

“THE Pope is determined to be lord and master of the world's game,” wrote Domenico Trevisano, the Venetian ambassador, referring to Julius II., in his report to the Signory dated April 1, 1510.<sup>1</sup>

Let us look on a little at this game, with its stratagems and surprises. The strange vicissitudes of the League of Cambrai may help us, in the end, to understand better some one of Raffaello's Stanze in the Vatican Palace, or some painting of Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel.

The League, signed at Cambrai, Dec. 10, 1508, by the Pope and the sovereigns of France, Austria, and Spain—to which also the Italian dukes of Ferrara and Urbino and the marquis of Mantua<sup>2</sup> immediately gave their adherence—had no less aim than the complete dismemberment of the Republic of the lagoons: this was the reply of Julius II. to the Signory's obstinate refusal to restore to the Holy See the important cities of Romagna,—Ravenna, Faenza, Cervi, Rimini,—which the Republic very im-

<sup>1</sup> *Il papa vuol essere il signore e maestro del guaioco del mondo.*—Alberi, *Relazione*, vol. iii., p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> Although Julius II. was the real author of the League, he did not formally join it until March 23, 1509.

properly retained. "I shall one day reduce your Venice to its original condition of a little fishing hamlet," said the Ligurian Pope to the Venetian envoy Pisani; and the haughty patrician replied without hesitation: "And we, Holy Father, if you are not more reasonable, shall reduce you to the condition of a village priest." Language like this shows how hot the quarrel had become. In the bull of excommunication which was soon after launched (April 27, 1509) against the Venetians, they are accused of uniting the craftiness of the wolf to the ferocity of the lion, and of flaying the sheep under pretence of shearing it.

One battle gained by the French, in the plain of Agnadello (May 14, 1509) sufficed to beat down the haughty Republic, to deprive her at one blow of all her conquests on the mainland and leave her nothing but her canals and her lagoons. "Then was defeated," writes the chronicler, Saint-Gelais, "a nation of men, sagacious, powerful and rich, who had never been conquered before since Attila, king of the Huns." In this extreme distress, the Signory took the wise resolve of abandoning to the coalition without a struggle the cities of Romagna and Apulia, and seeking only the restitution of so much of the mainland as had fallen into the hands of Louis XII. and the Emperor Maximilian. The Republic also desired to conciliate, at any price, the principal author of her woes: *Sanabit qui percussit!* the Signory wrote to Julius II., who was readily touched by this appeal. The possession of Romagna once secured to him, the Rovere had, in fact, no interest in the destruction of the famous old State; and many considerations made it advisable for him to

preserve to Italy her great bulwark upon the Adriatic. "If your country were not there, we should have to create it," he said, some months later, to Domenico Trevisano. He began to withdraw slowly from a league which had become burdensome, and carried on long negotiations with the Republic in respect to taking off the interdict which rested upon Venice. It was in vain that the French cardinals resident in Rome insisted that this interdict had been expressly stipulated for in the League of Cambrai, and that now to absolve the Republic would be a very severe wound to the French King, would be a knife-thrust in his heart (*dare cotello nel petto*). But Julius II., on his side, used language even stronger: "These Frenchmen are always wanting to make the Pope their King's chaplain," is one of the characteristic sayings of the Rovere, mentioned in Venetian documents.<sup>1</sup> Observe how certain "winged words" which have had so great a vogue in our time—these aphorisms concerning a state that "would have to be invented if it did not already exist," concerning a "Pope-Chaplain," and concerning "a knife-thrust in the heart"—are of very ancient date—the period of Julius II.!

On the 24th of February, 1510, Rome enjoyed the extraordinary and imposing spectacle of a Canossa in the midst of the Renaissance. On the steps of the old Vatican Basilica, now half destroyed by Bramante, in front of Filarete's bronze doors, five envoys of the Signory, all clad in scarlet, all bearers of names most illustrious in

<sup>1</sup> *Questi Francesi voleno pur ch' io sia capellano del suo re.*  
—Despatch of Girolamo Donato, June 19, 1510.

the Golden Book, such names as Mocenigo and Cappello, knelt and begged of the Pope pardon for the Republic of Saint Mark. Julius II., seated on the pontifical throne, held in his hand a golden wand; each of the twelve cardinals who attended him held also a wand. The Miserere was sung, and at each verse of the psalm the pontiff and the cardinals touched lightly with these wands the shoulder of each one of these penitents. This ceremony being ended, an immense crowd, with frantic acclamations of joy, accompanied the Venetian envoys as they left the Vatican.

It must be owned that the Pope's conduct in all this affair of the absolution was characterised by a supreme indifference towards his worthy allies of Cambrai; but the Venetians had acted in like manner in 1508, abandoning their ally, Louis XII., and concluding a three-years' truce with his adversary, the Emperor Maximilian; also, Maximilian, in turn, had had no scruples, this truce being but just signed, at entering the great coalition of the Powers against the Republic of Saint Mark. This was "the world's game," at that day, the policy constantly practised in the famous Cinquecento, and I should not venture to affirm that it has entirely fallen into desuetude in our own age of progress. Accordingly Ferdinand the Catholic endured this affront without too great an outcry, like a circumspect person, and one who had already received his promised reward, namely, the coveted towns in Apulia. The Emperor complained loudly, it is true, and, as usual, began by struggling violently, but, as usual, ended by parading his poverty, begging money



from everybody,—even from the Pope himself!—and wasting his time in fruitless agitation. Quite different was it with the Most Christian King, who had the right to declare himself unworthily treated by the man whom he had loaded with benefits, to whom, in 1506,<sup>1</sup> he had secured Bologna, and just now the cities of Romagna. The promoter of the League of Cambrai, now making terms with the Doge, outside and to the detriment of France,—the former confidant and friend of the Valois Kings, who from early date (as long ago as the reign of Alexander VI.) had done his utmost to drag the French into Italian affairs, now talking of “sending the French back across the Alps,”—verily, here was cause for the successor of Charles VIII. to be profoundly astonished! Nor, indeed, was this all. Ferrara was, at that time, regarded as an outpost and stronghold of France in the peninsula; and its Duke, the brave and cruel Alfonso d’ Este, had always been the liege-man of Louis XII., his most constant and devoted ally. Alfonso had given his adhesion to the League from its very beginning and continued to fight for it against the Venetians. Alfonso’s wife, the famous and too calumniated Lucrezia Borgia, charmed the Gallic

<sup>1</sup> In 1506, Louis XII. was at once the ally of the Pope and of Bentivoglio, and had even guaranteed to the latter the possession of his territory. Hearing that Julius II. was marching upon Bologna, the French King at first would not believe it: “Certainly the Pope must have had too much wine!” In the end, however, he resigned himself, and even sent eight thousand men to the Rovere, writing him also “to act rapidly”—(*faire vite*)! Julius II. exhibited to Macchiavelli the royal letter.—Macchiavelli, *Seconde légation à la cour de Rome*. (Letter from Civita-Castellane, Aug. 28, 1506.)

warriors by her graces and her "virtues"; she was proclaimed "the pearl of the world" by Bayard, the knight *sans peur et sans reproche*. "Indeed I may assert," writes the *Loyal Serviteur*, "that neither in her time nor long before, has lived a more triumphant princess, for she was beautiful, good, gentle, and courteous to all." But, one day, the Pope proceeded to summon abruptly Duke Alfonso, "as vassal of the Holy See," to cease all hostility against the Signory under canonical penalties the most severe; and later executed the threat by launching against the Duke (August 9, 1510) a furious excommunication which declared him despoiled of his States, of his titles, honours, and rights; and pronounced Ferrara and its territory restored to the Patrimony of the Church. The excommunication extended to "all the Duke's partisans," and thus struck very close to the Most Christian King himself. This was too much, and Louis XII. manifested no further consideration for the ungrateful and treacherous priest, "the peasant's son, who should be driven with a rod!" The King convoked at Tours (Sept. 15, 1510) "the bishops, prelates, doctors, and other learned men of the kingdom"; and this synod declared that the King could, with a good conscience, "*make war upon the Holy Father*, in his own defence and in the defence of his allies." There was talk, even, of convoking a general council "to reform the Church, *in its head and in its members*."

The Rovere was not overmuch afraid of any spiritual weapons which might be forged against him in Touraine; and he continued the advance of his troops into the duchy

of Ferrara. He had made up his mind what must be done: he proposed to get rid of these Frenchmen and Germans (not, however, having the courage to include the Spaniards also) who now for twenty years had been ravaging the luckless peninsula: *Fuori i barbari!* became henceforth his great war-cry. This cry made more than one Italian heart leap; and the humanists especially hailed with enthusiasm the second Julius and his bold *alea jacta*. The game, however, was most perilous; and cool observers, men habituated to affairs of state, and demoralised by them, gravely shook their heads. "I do not understand this Pope," wrote Francesco Vittori to Macchiavelli on the 3rd of August, 1510; "how is it possible that he should seek a war with France, having no other ally than the Venetians?"<sup>1</sup> But the Pope had a very respectable army and a well-filled treasury. Nor were the Venetians still overwhelmed with their defeat at Agnadello; they had recovered courage, reorganised their fleet and army, recaptured several places on the mainland, defeated the Emperor Maximilian's generals, and made prisoner Francesco Gonzaga, Marquis of Mantua, one of the members of the League. Finally,—and most important of all,—Julius II. had had the good luck to outwit Louis XII. in a bargain with the Swiss (March 4th), and to secure their assistance for five years.<sup>2</sup> Now

<sup>1</sup> Fragment of an unpublished letter quoted by Nitti, *Macchiavelli nella vita e nella dottrina*, vol. i., p. 399.

<sup>2</sup> It was at this time that Julius II. took into service, for himself and his successors, a corps of two hundred men as guards of the apostolic palace and the Pope's person,—the Swiss Guard that we see to-day,—whose uniform at that time consisted of the old

the victors at Granson and Morat were reputed at this epoch the most valiant soldiers in Europe. Macchiavelli believed them capable of conquering the world; and the Pope placed great reliance upon these sons of Tell.

The plan of the campaign was well organised. While the Swiss were to fall upon the French in the rear in the Milanese, a Venetian fleet would attack them in flank at Genoa, and the pontifical army would co-operate with the land force of the Doge across the territory of Ferrara. On the 17th of August, 1510, Julius II. set out from Rome to go to the scene of military operations: "Forsaking S. Peter's chair,"—as says the French chronicler,—“to assume the title of Mars, god of battles, to display in camps the triple crown, to sleep under a tent, and God knows how fine to see were his mitres, crosses, and croziers flying about in the open country.”

## II

Bologna became the headquarters of Julius II. in this memorable campaign. He made his entry into the city on the 22nd of September, and reviewed the troops which Swiss doublet and hose, with the black velvet cap. The colours have not always been black, red, and yellow; in Raffaello's *Mass of Bolsena*, the costume of the Swiss Guards seems to be green and grey (white?) combined with red and yellow (gold?). The descriptions of Leo X.'s famous *posse* in 1513 say that the Swiss Guard wore a costume striped with white and red. Lastly, in the report of the Venetian orators of 1523 (Alberi, vol. iii., p. 43), I read: *La guardia degli Svizzeri tutti vestiti di una livrea bianca, verde, e gialla*. May (de Romain-Motier), *Histoire militaire de la Suisse* (Lausanne, 1788, vol. viii., pp. 525-28), has but little information on this subject and says only: "The uniform is yellow, slashed with red and blue."

were on their way to Modena under the command of Francesco Maria della Rovere, then twenty-one years of age. Francesco Maria was the nephew of the Pope, and also the nephew (on the mother's side) of Guidubaldo, the last of the Montefeltri, whom he had succeeded in 1508 in the dukedom of Urbino; and it is generally admitted that Raffaello has represented him, in the *School of Athens*, in the figure wearing a white cloak at the left, above the group around Pythagoras—a splendid figure, of ideal beauty.<sup>1</sup> This handsome youth, with face so attractive and so ingenuous, was perfectly able, however, on occasion to assassinate his man; it is this same Francesco Maria also, who, as general of the Holy League, in 1527, allowed Charles of Bourbon to work his will, and—that he might avenge himself upon the Medici who had plundered him—looked on with folded arms at the infamous sack of Rome. In this year 1510, however, the Pope's nephew was but nominally the leader of the army of the Holy See; the true leader, who directed all the operations, the "Mars, god of battles," was that aged valetudinarian who was seen, in procession, passing through the streets of Bologna preceded by the Blessed Sacrament and followed by fourteen cardinals.

<sup>1</sup> Von Reumont (*Geschichte der Stadt Rom*, vol. iii., 2, p. 848), throws doubt, however, upon this tradition, which is not mentioned by Vasari. "Nothing can less resemble the authentic portrait of Francesco Maria by Titian, which is in the Uffizi in Florence (Hall of the Venetians, A). The great difference of age will not account for the radical divergence in face and figure. There is nothing in common between the blond and slender young man of the *School of Athens*, and the dark, thick-set personage of harsh, strong features in the Venetian picture."











Mars, in these circumstances so extraordinary, was perhaps excusable for forgetting his obligations towards Apollo; there was, however, some one to remind him of them with much insistence. The Pope had left Rome without furnishing Michelangelo with money, or making any arrangements for the painter's welfare; and the latter, always suspicious and surly, had nothing better to do than to follow up the Pope to his very camp, and claim fulfilment of the bargain that had been made. The biographers of Buonarroti redouble, at this point, their recriminations against the Rovere, against his niggardliness and unpardonable conduct towards the man of genius. But I confess myself inclined, rather, to admire Julius II. greatly for having, at such a moment, and in the midst of so many cares, deigned to listen to the grievances of his crabbed painter. He satisfied Buonarroti's demands, and used encouraging words to him, as we learn from a letter which the painter wrote to his father on returning from Bologna.<sup>1</sup> It is a curious fact that the letters of Michelangelo during the five years passed under the Sistine vault are always sad and morose; there are only griefs and complaints; not a sign of contentment, nor even of love for his work. No hope of fame, no prospect of better days, comes to clear the sombre, cloud-laden sky with the single exception of this letter, written on his return from Bologna. This shows an expectation of success, and it expresses a hope for the future; there even is

<sup>1</sup> *Letters of Michelangelo*, ed. Milanesi p. 33. The letter is undated, but the one following which is closely connected with it (p. 34), bears date of Oct. 11, 1510.

a word of sympathy, I might almost say of tenderness, for the Rovere:

“DEAR FATHER:—I have been to talk with the Pope . . . and I returned here Wednesday morning. He caused me to be paid by the *Camera* four hundred gold ducats. . . . Pray God that my work do me honour, and that I may satisfy the Pope; for if I satisfy him I hope that some good will come to us from this. *Pray God for him also.* . . .”

The Pope, at this moment, had, indeed, great need of being prayed for, since he had fallen seriously ill in the early part of October, and, moreover, was in danger of being made prisoner. The French Maréchal Chaumont, governor of the Milanese, had abruptly abandoned his position before Modena, and was advancing upon Bologna, which, at this moment, was entirely undefended; on the 18th of October, Chaumont was but three leagues distant from the city. “They shall not have me alive,” cried the terrible pontiff, writhing upon his bed of pain; “they shall not have me alive; *I will take poison first!*”<sup>1</sup> From his bed, however, he managed to deceive the French general by dilatory negotiations, till the arrival of succour; and it was Chaumont who died soon after of vexation at having been outwitted by a moribund old man; of remorse, also—a characteristic trait of the time—for having borne arms against the vicar of Christ; and he begged for absolution from the Pope before he expired. Julius II.

<sup>1</sup> Despatch of the prothonotary Lippomano, of Oct. 20, 1510, *ap. Sanuto*, vol. xi., p. 268. (Moritz Brosch, *Papst Julius II.*, p. 351, note 34.)

recovered his health after two months (December, 1510), furious at having lost precious time, furious against the Swiss, who had played him false in the Milanese, and against the Venetians, who had failed in the attack on Genoa, furious especially against the Duke of Urbino, who had not succeeded in taking the fortress of Mirandola, considered the key to the duchy of Ferrara, and valiantly defended by the Signora Francesca Trivulzio, widow of Count Luigi, of the great family of Pico della Mirandola. Julius II. could bear it no longer; and on the second day of the year 1511 he set out to join the besieging army. Again he narrowly escaped falling into the enemy's hands. The Chevalier Bayard and the Duke of Ferrara had prepared an ambush for him on the road beyond the castle San Felice, where he had spent a night; and he was just able to fall back and take refuge in the castle. "Quickly and unassisted," relates the *Loyal Serviteur*, "he got out of his litter, and himself aided in raising the drawbridge; which was the deed of a wise man, for had he waited but long enough to say a paternoster, he would have been crunched (*croqué*)." The knight *sans peur et sans reproche* was "much depressed at having missed the Pope."

It was now the depth of winter and a winter exceptionally severe; the horses plunged breast-high through snow; and to remain in the trenches before Mirandola was a real hardship, even to the stoutest soldiers. Julius II., scarcely recovered from his recent severe illness, took no account of this and remained for hours under the inclement sky, exposed to high winds, and covered with the

falling snow. In intrepidity under fire—many balls penetrated the hovel which served him as a dwelling-place, and killed men at his side<sup>1</sup>—and in endurance of fatigues and hardships, the Pope was not inferior to the most rugged of his veterans; and, unhappily, he surpassed them in big oaths and rough speech.<sup>2</sup> He had let his beard grow, since his illness at Bologna, which gave him an unusual, almost savage appearance,—*cum la barba, che pare un orso*,—wrote the envoy Antonio Gattico, to his lord of Mantua; and the heavy garments in which he wrapped himself to resist the cold added still further to the extraordinary character of his aspect. A very curious picture which I have seen in the Bruschi palace at Corneto—the work of a very poor artist, but manifestly drawn from life—represents the great Rovere at this historic moment. In his attire there is nothing which reveals the pontiff or even the priest: a huge furred and wadded overcoat envelops the whole figure up to the chin; on the head, like a helmet, is a monstrous hood of thick grey woollen, a *cuffiotto*, as the Italians of to-day would call it. The beard is still short and bristling, the expression of the face hard and ignoble,—not much resembling the portraits of Julius II. made on

<sup>1</sup> Julius II. offered one of these cannon-balls to the Santa Casa at Loretto, where it may still be seen, hanging by a chain from the ceiling.

<sup>2</sup> A specimen of this untranslatable language: "*La Santità Sua. . . . cum dir che 'l Duca da Urbino è un figalillo, e che 'l vol che ritorna indretto al bordello.*" Despatch of Antonio Gattico, Mantuan envoy, of Jan. 3, 1511.—Luzio, *Federico Gonzaga*, *ostaggio*, p. 569.

divers occasions by Raffaello! But, looked at closely, this head in the Corneto picture has the effect of being a good likeness; it suggests the medal of Caradosso; it suggests also the profile of the young cardinal Giuliano della Rovere in Melozzo's fresco, only taking into account the passage of time.—thirty years of activity and devouring ambition.<sup>1</sup>

Mirandola capitulated the 21st of January, 1511; and the Rovere was so eager to take possession that he would not wait till the barricaded gates of the city could be set open, but had himself hoisted in a sort of basket up to a breach which had been made in the wall the previous evening.<sup>2</sup> So long as the place held out, he talked of nothing but putting the garrison to the sword, and treating the Countess Francesca as the most degraded of her sex. Once victorious, he did nothing of this kind; he personally escorted the Countess to the frontier, and listened with an indulgent smile to her threats of a speedy revenge. But he treated the Count Castiglione (author of

<sup>1</sup> It is to the beloved and regretted M. Geffroy, formerly director of the French School at Rome, that I owe my knowledge of this very curious portrait at Corneto. Count Bruschi has had the kindness to allow me to have a photograph made from this picture, which bears the subscription "Jul. II. Pont. Max." I have not been able to obtain access to the *Armeria* of the Vatican, where, according to tradition, the armour of Julius II. is preserved. Melozzo's fresco, as every one knows, is now (transferred to canvas) in the third hall of the Vatican picture gallery.

<sup>2</sup> In the *Galleria geografica* of the Vatican (a prolongation of the gallery of the Library), where are the maps of provinces and plans of cities belonging to the Holy See, Julius II. is represented, much more decorously, making his entry into Mirandola in the *sedia gestatoria*, a canopy above his head. It is needless to say the paintings in this gallery are not contemporary with the events represented, nor are they even of the sixteenth century.

the *Cortegiano*) to rebuffs only, when the latter came to congratulate him in the name of the Duke of Urbino. The scene was not lacking in piquancy: the clever and distinguished Count Baldassare,—you will remember the marvellous portrait of him in the Louvre by the hand of Raffaello,—the most intellectual pleasure-lover of that epoch of the Renaissance and its *arbiter elegantiarum*, haranguing a Pope arrayed in wadded overcoat and *cuffotto*, who had on his lips only *bestemmie* and guard-room talk! Julius II. returned triumphantly to Bologna; “and it was,” says Paris de Grassis, “a great joy for the people to see the Pope, venerable by age and his long beard, mounted, like a young soldier, on a prancing horse (*quasi juvenis bellicosus*). He was simply vested in a rochet, without a stole; nor was the Host carried before him. . . .” During all the rest of the winter he was seen coming and going among the cities of Romagna, negotiating and arming, treating with various envoys, or putting fortresses in a condition for defence. He went in the snow, the rain, the mud, jolted about in the fearful vehicles still in use in this part of Italy,—high-wheeled carts drawn by four oxen (*in helice vectus, quatuor bobus simpliciter trahentibus*).

In France, in Germany, and in still other countries arose an outcry of surprise and indignation at news of a Successor of the Apostles in command of armies, besieging fortresses, waging war upon a woman, a widow, the defender of her children's inheritance! Pamphleteers and caricaturists had free course in Paris; Ulrich von Hutten, then a young man, soon after hounded on public opinion

in the Rhenish country, by his *Descriptio Julii II.*, and many biting epigrams; Peter Martyr wrote from Spain that his hair stood on end (*cristæ mihi præ horrore riguerunt*) at the reading of certain of the Rovere's bulls. The sentiment was quite different in Italy, in the sweet land *dove il si suona*. Some evil tongues in Rome—the Eternal City had always a supply of these—might indeed declare that the Pope had “thrown S. Peter's keys into the Tiber and kept only S. Paul's sword”<sup>1</sup>; but Italian patriots, poets, and humanists praised to the skies the triple-crowned soldier, “who gave back to Latium her old renown, her liberty so long trodden under foot by barbarians.”<sup>2</sup> To this Latium, refined and enervated as it was, the tonsured old man with his sword was like a grand Biblical figure, a second Moses,—a *pontefice terribile*, in whom there was nothing to find fault with but—his beard: from the time of Stephen I., from the third century, Rome had not seen, it was declared, a Pope unshorn! It is really astonishing to observe the importance which the men of that day attached to this question of toilette, the endless references to the Rovere's beard in despatches and letters of the time. Diplomats and chroniclers are garrulous thereupon; they are forever recurring to the subject, and discuss “the event” in every variety of tone. Unquestionably the beard made a sensation, made a scandal; after the death of Julius II., his own Council of the Lateran did not neglect to remind all the members of the

<sup>1</sup> Verse of Pasquino. Roscoe, *Leo X.*, vol. ii., p. 85.

<sup>2</sup> *Jo. Antonii Flaminii: Ad Julium II. Carmina Ill. Poetarum Ital.*, vol. iv., p. 357.



clergy of the canonical obligation of the razor.<sup>1</sup> How is it that German criticism has failed to find in this amusing historical fact a *motif* for the phenomenal beard of the *Moses* in San Pietro in Vincoli?

There were soon subjects more serious to comment upon. The winter had necessarily slackened military operations; but at the approach of spring, the "barbarians" again vigorously resumed the offensive, and the new commander of the French troops exhibited neither the hesitations nor the scruples of poor Chaumont. This new commander had, moreover, a personal injury to avenge; for he was no other than the Maréchal Jean Jacques Trivulzio, the father of Countess Francesca della Mirandola. He prepared his revenge with consummate art, established an understanding with the malcontents in Bologna, and, one fine day (May 21, 1511) the good people of classic Felsina revolted, drove out the Pope's legate, Alidosi, Cardinal of Pavia, recalled their former masters, the Bentivogli, and destroyed the great statue of Julius II. over the portal of San Petronio, the work of Michelangelo. The Duke of Urbino, called upon for help

<sup>1</sup> Session IX. of the Lateran Council, May 5, 1514. Leo X. and Adrian VI. were clean-shaven. After the sack of Rome, Clement VII. let his beard grow in sign of mourning, and caused a treatise to be written on the subject by Valerianus,—*Pro sacerdotum barbis*. From that time on, many pontiffs have worn the Apostolic beard. Paul V. Borghese was the first to wear the Henri IV. beard. From Clement XI. to our time the pontiffs have been shaven. I borrow most of these details from Moroni (s. v. *barba*), who seemed to me special authority in this matter. Before becoming the estimable scholar that we know, author of a voluminous ecclesiastical dictionary, the worthy canon for many years served as barber to Gregory XVI.









by the legate, arrived just in time to find the city already occupied by Trivulzio, who inflicted upon him a crushing defeat. The Countess Francesca returned to her castle of Mirandola; Duke Alfonso d'Este recovered Modena and the other places in the territory of Ferrara; the Pope's army broke up in the greatest disorder.

It was at Ravenna, whither he had gone to seek and organise new resources for the war, that Julius II. received news of the catastrophe of Bologna; shortly the legate and the general appeared in his presence, each to throw upon the other the responsibility for the disaster. After a stormy audience with the Pope, Francesco Maria met, in the street, the Cardinal Alidosi, and ran him through with his sword in full daylight (May 28th). The young man of twenty-one was not at his first work of this kind; four years earlier he had assassinated at Urbino a man named Andrea Bravo, who was the lover of his sister (a Countess Varano), and the favourite of his adoptive father, the old Duke Guidubaldo. It was in the destiny of Francesco Maria to kill the favourites of his two greatest benefactors: Julius II. had an unbounded affection for the Cardinal of Pavia, who was perhaps the only person he ever really loved.

The story is that one day, early in the reign of Alexander VI., Alidosi saved the life of Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere, by preventing him from touching a poisoned draught which the Borgia had prepared for him. Alidosi was the Cardinal's companion in exile in France, and became his most intimate confidant in the Vatican Palace. He shared his master's artistic tastes, and had the merit

of protecting and honouring Michelangelo as the greatest genius of the age. In the latter's great quarrel with the Rovere in 1506, the Cardinal of Pavia appeared as a zealous mediator, eager to bring about a reconciliation, and testifying to the kindly feelings of the pontiff. He it was, also, who, in the name of Julius II., signed the contract for painting the Sistine vault. We can never sufficiently regret the loss of the correspondence which Alidosi maintained with Buonarroti at various times. Only a single letter remains, dated Ravenna, May 3, 1510 (a year before the murder), written in a tone of deference and cordiality rarely used at that time by the powerful of this world towards artists:

"Having constructed at La Magliana, to the satisfaction of his Holiness, a great edifice with a little chapel, I should like to compensate for the narrow proportions of this *cappelletta* by the excellence of its paintings, and, notably, by a *Baptism of Christ*<sup>1</sup> from your hand, with which no other can be compared. I believe that I may count upon you, as you may upon me in all cases. I know that you are very much occupied; nevertheless, I beg and conjure you, if ever you have wished to please me, to make these two small figures in fresco (the Christ and S. John), which I shall value much more than the whole edifice, and for which I shall be under eternal obligations to you. . . ."

The letter has on the *verso* this emphatic address:

<sup>1</sup> The chapel was dedicated to Saint John the Baptist. Alidosi's letter is published by Danielli, *Carte Michelangeolesche inedite* (Milan, 1865, 4°), p. 14.

“To Michelangelo, prince of painting and of the statuary art.”

Alidosi's building at La Magliana<sup>1</sup> is still standing—sadly ruinous, it is true, but in the ruins can easily be detected the general plan of the architecture, due probably to Giuliano di Sangallo. The rectangular court, protected by a moat and surrounded by walls with Guelphic battlements, is anterior to the epoch of Julius II., and dates from the pontificate of Innocent VIII.; you pass through the monumental portal into the courtyard, and Alidosi's “great edifice” is before you. On the ground floor, five arches adorned with pilasters give access to a spacious vestibule; above, is a large and handsome hall, whose walls are decorated with frescos representing Apollo and the Muses. The left wing of the building joins, at its extremity, the casino of Innocent VIII., recognisable by its octagonal pillars; in the angle formed by this wing and the main building a second vestibule on the ground floor leads to the *cappelletta*. A pupil of Perugino, Giovanni di Pietro, called Lo Spagna, painted both the great hall of the Muses and three lunettes of the little chapel,—*God the Father Blessing the World*, an *Annunciation*, and a *Visitation*: the fourth lunette above the entrance and opposite the altar was to have had for subject the *Baptism of Christ*, and it was this which the Cardinal of Pavia desired to have executed by Buonarroti. The Cardinal did honour to his august master with the whole building: the name of Julius II. surmounts each window

<sup>1</sup> About nine miles from Rome, the first station on the line to Civita Vecchia.



opening into the courtyard; only over the entrance to the chapel is this inscription: *F. Card. Papiens. Julii II Alumnus.*

Compared with other famous Roman villas, notably with that one which the banker Agostino Chigi erected about this time in the Trastevere (the *Farnesina* of the present day), Alidosi's "great edifice" is modest enough, and says more for its founder's gratitude than for his excessive love of splendour. The great fame of La Magliana really dates from the following reign, when Leo X. made it his favourite hunting-lodge, the central point of his *dulces venationes*, which extended thence to Ostia, Palo, and Cervetri. It was his pleasure to pass whole months of the year in this lodge on the bank of the Tiber with his huntsmen, his musicians, his poets, and his buffoons; and in the account-books of his reign which have come down to us, we find many a mention of expenses incurred for the aqueducts, stables, warrens, kennels, aviaries, and falconries of La Magliana. Not a vestige of these Medicean works is left; the place which once resounded with so much merry tumult is to-day one of the most deserted and desolate parts of the Campagna.<sup>1</sup>

Still another building, and this one in Rome itself, in

<sup>1</sup> Gruner and Platner (*I freschi della Cappella Magliana*, London, 1847) had the opportunity of seeing these frescos in their place and have best described their positions. Since then, all have been dispersed. Those of the hall of the Muses (with Apollo playing the violin, as in Raffaello's *Parnasso*) are now in the Picture Gallery of the Capitol (Hall I, Nos. 1-10). They have been transferred to canvas and deplorably retouched. The lunette, from the chapel, of *God the Father Blessing the World*, is now in the Louvre. In place of the *Baptism of Christ*, which the

the Leonine City, speaks to us of Alidosi, although this palace is now generally known as the Convento dei Penitenzieri.<sup>1</sup> It was built (1470-90) by Domenico della Rovere, Cardinal of San Clemente; the arms of this nephew of Sixtus IV., and his device, *Deo soli*, are sculptured profusely in the apartments of the interior. The spacious court, with its octagonal columns and its decoration in *graffito*, bears marks of the epoch which, rightly or wrongly, is designated by the name of Baccio Pontelli; and in the first story we may admire an enchanting ceiling by Pinturicchio, half in fresco and half in stucco, with delicious representations of centaurs, sirens, griffins, and other mythological and allegorical subjects; it is only to be regretted that the good Penitentiary fathers should have disfigured this splendid hall by frightful compartments. Cardinal Domenico died in 1501, and some years later there is mention of his house as a sort of headquarters of the artists who, under the direction of Bramante, and before Raffaello's coming, were employed to paint the "Upper Rooms" of the Vatican; but as early as 1509,

Cardinal desired but did not obtain, there was a *Martyrdom of Saint Felicitas*, which we know only from an engraving by Marcantonio, with the name, Raphaël Urbin. I, myself, believe, in contradiction to the opinion of Dollmayr (*Raphaël's Werkstatt*, Vienna, 1895, pp. 106-108), that the *God Blessing the World*, of the Louvre, and the *Martyrdom of Saint Felicitas*, were painted from designs by Raffaello, after Alidosi's death, and probably at the command of Julius II.

<sup>1</sup> Piazza Scossacavalli, No. 145, opposite the Palazzo Giraud-Torlonia. It is surprising that Schmarow, in his work *Pinturicchio in Rom* (Stuttgart, 1882), should make no mention of the Convento dei Penitenzieri.

it appears from Albertini's *Mirabilia* that it had become the dwelling of Alidosi. It was probably a gift from Julius II., and the new proprietor made it a duty to decorate with special splendour the great chapel of his residence,—a singular decoration and most characteristic! In this sanctuary of the faith nothing speaks of God; everything is attributed to man,—to two men, the Ligurian Pope and his devoted *alumnus*. No contrast more piquant to the *Deo soli* of the founder could be imagined. The chapel in its construction reminds one of the Sistine; it is a long rectangular nave with a round-arched vault: on each of the two tympani rises a tall oak (the emblem of the Rovere) whose branches overspread a cardinal's hat, and whose trunk is barred by a somewhat far-fetched inscription<sup>1</sup>: the vault is in squares, where the Pope's blazon and that of the Cardinal of Pavia (a black eagle with a white lily on the breast) alternate throughout, on a background of gold. The intimacy of the master and his man is proclaimed here with much redundancy and ostentation, but it would be unjust not to recognise the elegant and harmonious simplicity of the whole effect.

Is it credible that this favourite and "nursling" of Julius II., the friend of Michelangelo and of Erasmus, the descendant of the ancient and illustrious lords of Imola,—who, moreover, to brilliant mental gifts united the advantages of remarkable beauty,<sup>2</sup>—this Cardinal of

<sup>1</sup> *Agite mortales ocia, quos cibo et umbra quercus alit.*

<sup>2</sup> Eugène Müntz maintains that Raffaello's famous *Cardinal* in Madrid (there falsely called Bibbiena), is really a portrait of Alidosi (*Archivio storico dell'Arte*, 1891, p. 328). Authentic medals of

Pavia, was, nevertheless, one of the vilest, most rapacious, most cruel men that ever trod the earth? Such he is declared to be by Paolo Giovio, Guicciardini, and all the other contemporary historians! Bembo—under obligations to him, moreover,—has etched his portrait in these concise and cutting words: *Vir cui nulla fides, nulla religio, nihil pudicum, nihil unquam sanctum fuit*. "If I had to relate his treacheries and rascalities of every kind," says Paris de Grassis, "a volume would not suffice." How was it possible for the Rovere to be ignorant of all this, and if not ignorant, how could he be indifferent to it,—he, who was never cruel or malicious, and, notwithstanding his lawlessness and his fits of temper, almost always showed real nobility of mind?

I confess this is to me one of the most irritating enigmas of the reign of Julius II.; but it is certain that the tragic death of Alidosi was everywhere heard of with delight, and not a word of blame was meted out to his murderer. Paolo Giovio celebrates in glowing verse the young duke-justiciary; he compares Francesco Maria to Hercules making an end of Cacus and the Hydra; Fausto Maddaleni declares that never hand more noble destroyed such a Catiline and Verres in one<sup>1</sup>; even the dry and Alidosi, in the Bibliothèque de l'École des Beaux-Arts in Paris seem to confirm this conjecture.

<sup>1</sup> Maddaleni's quatrain (hitherto unpublished) is in the MS. collection of his poems in the Vatican Library, No. 3419, p. 59:

D. M. Francisci Alidoxii.

*"Moribus et vita Verres, Catilina cadendo,  
Sed non pugnando fortiter, interii.*

*Unum tamen misero laus est, unumque levamen:  
Non poteram dextra nobiliore perire."*

pedantic master of ceremonies of the papal Court becomes lyric on this theme:

“*Bone Deus!* how just are Thy judgments, and what thanks we owe Thee that Thou has rewarded the false traitor according to his deeds; for we may rightly say that this punishment was executed, or at least allowed by Thee, without whose will not a leaf stirs upon the tree. Again, therefore, let thanks be rendered to Thee!”<sup>1</sup>

To Julius II. the blow was cruel: he suffered as ruler, as pontiff, as friend of the victim, as kinsman of the murderer. He could no longer endure the sight of places blood-stained by a crime so horrible: two hours after the fatal event he entered his litter to be borne to Rome: he wept! Reaching Rimini on the 28th of May, he read on the cathedral doors placards announcing the convocation of a general council at Pisa for the first day of September,—a council “to reform the Church in its head and in its members,”—and the call bore the signature of nine cardinals. Thus Louis XII. and Maximilian audaciously executed their threat made at Tours: what no man had dared to do against the Borgia had been ventured against him, the nephew of Sixtus IV.! Since the disaster of

<sup>1</sup> Withal, neither Paris de Grassis, nor Guicciardini, nor Paolo Giovio, nor Bembo, nor any other man, produces *one single positive fact* in support of the charges they all make against the Cardinal of Pavia, for his severity against the Bolognese can scarcely be intended here, and still less is it to be admitted that Alidosi was in connivance with Trivulzio against the Pope. A jealousy of the sole and all-powerful favourite of the Rovere, as well as a desire to please the Duke of Urbino, may perhaps have had a large share in blackening the memory of Alidosi. For one, I believe that he merits a new trial.

Bologna, the tragedy was developing with bewildering rapidity; and, like every actual human tragedy, it had also its comic, even grotesque episodes,—for example, the strange fancy that had seized the Emperor about this time of wishing to supplant the Rovere on the pontifical throne. Maximilian announced this in so many words to Ferdinand the Catholic, to Lichtenstein, and to his own daughter, Margaret, Governess of the Netherlands; a letter to Margaret, written in French, has the signature: “Maximilianus, the future Pope!”

On the 27th of June, 1511, Julius returned, depressed and defeated, to the city of Rome, whence, ten months before, he had gone out with hopes so radiant. S. Paul's sword had been broken in his hands, and there were many who asked whether it would now be possible for him to fish up out of the Tiber the keys of S. Peter.

### III

The first act of the pontiff, after his return to Rome, was the promulgation (July 18, 1511) of the bull *Sacro-sanctæ*, by which he convoked a general Council for the 19th of April of the following year in the Lateran Basilica, while he smote with excommunication and anathema all who should take part in the schismatic assembly at Pisa. This was, as a grave contemporary historian expressed it, “to drive out one nail with another,”<sup>1</sup> to throw confusion into the hostile ranks and destroy all

<sup>1</sup> *Ut quod agunt clavum clavo truderet.* H. Borgii, *Hist. de bello Ital.*, vol. vi., p. 93.

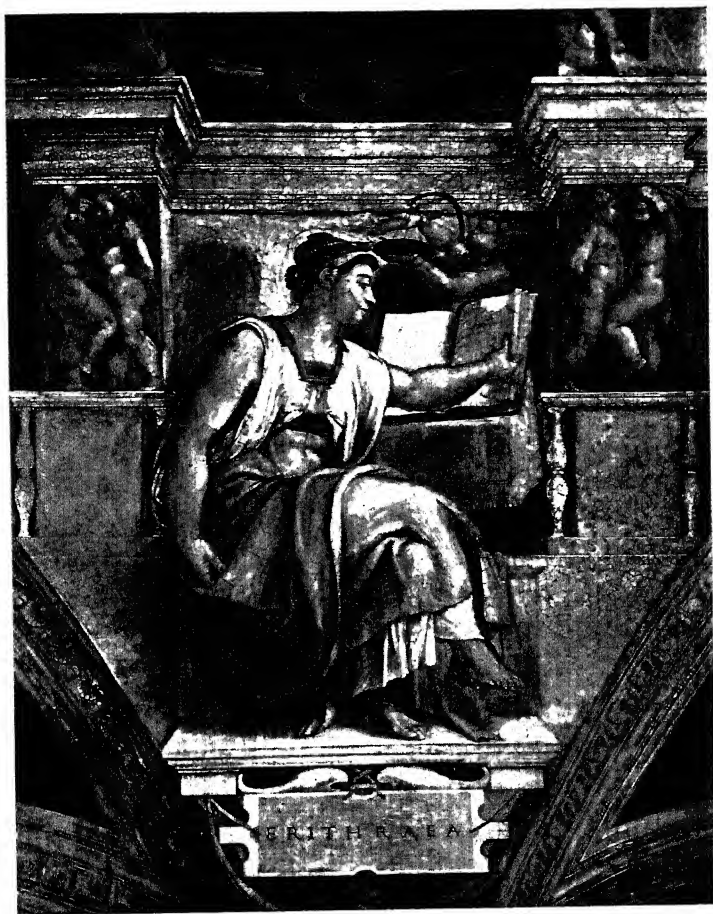
pretext for agitation. From this day forward, in fact, the Council of Pisa, the *conciliabulum*, as men at once began calling it, lost all *raison d'être* canonical or logical, and had but a factitious and factious existence. Composed almost exclusively of French clergy, repudiated by the generality of the Catholic world, ill-received by the townspeople where it essayed to hold its sessions, the Council of Pisa wandered about—from Pisa to Milan, from Milan to Asti, from Asti to Lyons, where it vanished in the fogs of the Rhone.

It had been feared for a moment, immediately after the catastrophe of Bologna, that Trivulzio would seize an occasion so favourable to march straight upon Rome. But this fear was quickly dispelled. Far from seeking to push his victory to an extreme Louis XII. recalled his general to Milan, and sent to the Vatican (in July) a very near kinsman of the Pope, one of the Orsini, with propositions of peace which were astonishingly moderate. This was due to the fact that, notwithstanding the Synod of Tours, and the license it gave to make war upon the Holy Father, the scruples which Chaumont had felt lay at the bottom of very many hearts; it was also to be considered that by too much success and too large an increase of territory in Italy, the Most Christian King risked arousing the jealousy, and with it the consciences, of the other Catholic kings. Already, the preceding year at Blois, whither he had come on a mission to the Court of France, Macchiavelli, by no means to be suspected of affection for the papacy, had made the mischievous remark that there was no worthier











pretext to be employed against any prince than to declare oneself the protector of the Holy Church against him, and that the King in this war might have all Europe upon his hands.<sup>1</sup> Julius II. welcomed with much cordiality the French overtures, but only that he might gain time, re-organise his army, strengthen his alliance with the Swiss, and negotiate with all the States hostile to France, notably with Spain and England. His negotiations were carried forward with a rapidity surprising for the period; at the end of six weeks (about the middle of August) the principal articles of the Holy League were already agreed upon, and only awaited their solemn ratification.

Meantime, there is no change in the Pope's daily life, during these critical, agonised six weeks. His meals are always very abundant, with copious draughts of a certain strong, thick wine<sup>2</sup>; he goes hunting; he takes the country air from time to time in villas of the neighbourhood. *È una terribile cosa come manza Sua Santità*, writes (July

<sup>1</sup> *Tirarsi adosso tutto il mondo* (Letter from Blois, July 26, 1510).

<sup>2</sup> Count Gnoli, the very courteous prefect of the Biblioteca Nazionale (Vittorio Emanuele), has kindly pointed out to me the following amusing anecdote in a rather rare book, entitled *Facetie, Motti e Burle*, by Lodovico Domenichi (Venice, 1584, p. 20): "In one of the rooms decorated for him by Raffaello, Pope Julius II. had himself painted on one wall hearing mass on his knees; on the other, coming in from the Belvedere borne in his *sedia*. The latter portrait is much more highly coloured than the former (*molto più colorito*), and many censured Raffaello for not making the two alike. But Marcantonio Colonna replied to them that they were all in error, and that Raffaello had well observed the proprieties (*aveva servato benissimo il decore*), the Pope being sober at mass, and very red-faced when he came from the Belvedere, where he had been drinking."

12, 1511) to Isabella Gonzaga, Marchesa di Mantua, a certain Grossino, in the suite of her son Federico who was at that time living in Rome, and had his lodgings in the Belvedere.<sup>1</sup>

“The Pope has hunted several days at Ostia in company with il signor Federico. His Holiness is delighted whenever he brings down a large pheasant; then he shows the bird to all who are near him, talking and laughing much. . . . To-day (July 25th) the Pope went to the *vigna* of Messer Agostino Chigi [the Farnesina], and remained all day, having dinner and supper there. It is a beautiful *palazotto*, though not yet finished; very rich in all kinds of ornamentation, especially in splendid coloured marbles. Signor Federico sat at table with the Pope, and, during dinner, recited in his presence a Latin eclogue.”

This was the second visit within the month (the first occurred July 5th) which the Rovere had paid to the fortunate owner of the *palazotto*, and I greatly suspect that these *gentilezze* were not entirely without motive. We know from other sources that the Pope about this time borrowed from the great Siennese banker the sum of forty thousand ducats, leaving with him in pawn the famous tiara of Paul II., *il regno*, as it was called; now it is precisely in the interval between these two visits made to the Transteverine villa that Grossino writes (July

<sup>1</sup>I borrow these quotations from Grossino's letters from the interesting paper of Signor Aless. Luzio: *Federico Gonzaga, ostaggio*, in the *Archivio di storia patria Romana*, 1886, vol. ix., pp. 509-582.

12th) to the Marchesa without at all suspecting this financial transaction: "His Holiness takes great pleasure in looking at jewels; yesterday he had brought to him (from the Castle of Sant' Angelo) the two *regni*,—one, of the value of two hundred thousand ducats, the other, of one hundred thousand. I think that never again shall I behold jewels so fine, with so many pearls and precious stones." The next year (December, 1512), Julius II., victorious and triumphant, took back from the banker the *regno*, without ceremony, and without payment, simply sending the *bargello* to get the pledge, or, failing that, to bring the person of whomsoever detained it.<sup>1</sup> Messer Agostino Chigi must have seen that day that State loans, even with security given, were not always the safest of investments!

It is needless to add that, since his return to Rome, the Rovere thinks often of his artistic collections and undertakings. He occupies himself with the installing of his *anticaglie* in the charming *cortile* which Bramante has built for them. "The Pope," says a letter of Grossino dated July 12th, "has placed in the Belvedere an *Apollo*, which is thought as fine as the *Laocoon*"<sup>2</sup>; later, he causes also

<sup>1</sup> MS. of Tizio, cited by Cugnoni (*Archivio di storia patri Romana*, vol. iii., p. 295). Sanuto gives a slightly different version of this incident.

<sup>2</sup> This appears to be contradictory to Albertini (*Mirabilia*) who, as early as 1509, placed the *Apollo* in the Vatican. Possibly we should distinguish here between the Vatican and the Belvedere. As to the *Tiberinus* and the *Cleopatra*, Grossino gives very curious details in his letters of January and February, 1512 (Luzio, *loc. cit.*, p. 435 and note).

the *Tiber* (now in the Louvre) and the *Cleopatra* (the *Ariadne* of the Vatican) to be transported thither. During this same month of July the Pope poses for his portrait in the fresco of the *Decretals*; under date of August 16th, Grossino's correspondence speaks incidentally of the room "in which His Holiness is painted by Raffaello, *al natural con la barba*." He also goes to visit Michelangelo's work in the Sistine, and obtains from the artist a promise that on the approaching grand *fiesta* of the Madonna, the chapel shall be freed from its scaffoldings and given back to its religious use. The eve and the day of the Assumption, he comes thither to hear vespers and mass, and to enjoy the effect of the paintings of the vault.<sup>1</sup>

Two days later (August 17th), he is at the point of death; he has contracted a malarial fever in a day's shooting at Ostia, and his life is despaired of. The report of his death is spread through the city, and then ensues a strange, fantastic scene, a reminiscence of the times of Rienzo and Porcaro. The heirs of great feudal names — Colonna, Orsini, Cesarini, Savelli — go up to the Capitol, and call upon the Roman people to recover their ancient liberties. In an impassioned harangue, which is withal very characteristic of the spirit animating this hypocritical defence of popular rights, the young Pompeo Colonna, bishop of Riete, abbot of Subiaco and Grotto

<sup>1</sup> *Pontifex in Vigilia et Die Gloriosæ Virginis Assumptæ voluit interesse Vesperis et Missæ in majori Capella Palatina per Sacristam celebratis festivitate. Nam ea capella Assumptioni prædictæ dicata est, et ad eam Pontifex venit, vel ut picturas novas ibidem noviter detectas videret, vel quia sic ex devotione ductus fuerit.* Paris de Grassis, 15 Aug., 1511.

Ferrata,<sup>1</sup> depicts the shameful rule under which has fallen the great Republic which once ruled the world: "An abject rule, comparable only to that existing in Egypt, where neither the dignity of the Sultan nor the grades of the *Mamalucchi* are hereditary. But the Sultan of Cairo and his Mamelukes are at least brave men and proud, hostile to all the effeminacies of life, whereas Rome is the slave of idlers, cowards, foreigners, and low-born men." The two *Conservatori* of Rome, Altieri and Stefaneschi, are already proposing the re-establishment of the Republic, the arming of the populace, and the seizure of the Castle of Sant' Angelo, when suddenly from the Vatican comes the news that the Pope's supposed sinking was only a fainting-fit, and that the rabbi (the Jewish physician of his Holiness) still gives hope.<sup>2</sup> At once, the Capitoline *piazza* is cleared; the noble tribunes disperse in all directions; Pompeo Colonna takes refuge in Subiaco; Orsini and Pietro Margano flee as far as into France.

Care was taken to conceal from the sick man the mad doings of this day on the Capitol, but in the end he got

<sup>1</sup> It is the same Pompeo Colonna who later, as Cardinal, by the ambush of Sept. 20, 1526 preluded the great sack of Rome. I borrow his Capitoline discourse from Guicciardini, *Storia*, vol. x., p. 3. —In the great hall of the Colonna Gallery in Rome is a portrait of Pompeo as Cardinal, a work of Lorenzo Lotto, but much restored. The Cardinal has an extremely insignificant head; the spaniel that he caresses with his right hand looks much more intelligent.

<sup>2</sup> On the 4th of February, 1572, a fortnight before the death of Julius II., the archdeacon Gabbioneta writes to the Marquis of Mantua: "*Sono stà chiamati molti medici, ma il Rabi è il creduto et è quello che fa tutto, per haverlo governato molti e molti anni.*" —A. Luzio, *loc. cit.*, p. 554.



the whole story, and knew also how many cardinals (Grossino incriminates no less than fifteen) were sharers in the conspiracy of the barons. These Roman barons owed to him their deliverance from the sanguinary tyranny of the Borgias, and the members of the Colonna and of the Orsini houses were allied to the Rovere by family ties! And what could be said of these cardinals—some of whom took part openly in the *conciliabulum* of Pisa, and others covertly incited the city to revolt against the sovereign pontiff? He saw himself betrayed and abandoned by the very men who most owed him gratitude and attachment. His nearest relative, the Duke of Urbino, he had been obliged to excommunicate and bring to judgment for a horrible crime; feeling himself near death he granted absolution to the young man and admitted him to his bedside, though still without ceasing to distrust him. Of all who surrounded Julius II. in his illness there was but one person entirely beyond suspicion, and this was young Federico Gonzaga, whose name has been often mentioned, but whose presence in the Belvedere needs to be explained.

Francesco Gonzaga, Marquis of Mantua, a member of the League of Cambrai, had been made prisoner by the Venetians at the battle of Legnano in August, 1509. His wife, the celebrated Isabella d'Este Gonzaga, after making application to all the Powers in turn,—to the Emperor, to the King of France, and even to the Grand Turk,—at last became aware that Julius II. alone had influence enough with the Signory to obtain the liberation of the formidable soldier, her husband. Julius II. did obtain it

(July, 1510); but Isabella was obliged first to consent that her son Federico, at that time ten years of age, should remain with the Pope as a hostage, a guarantee for the conduct of the Marquis in future. Do not hastily cry out upon the lack of generosity on the part of the Rovere! The "chivalrous" Maximilian, and Louis XII., who was called "the Father of his People," had made to the poor mother exactly the same "inhuman and impious" condition, as she calls it in her sad letters; these men of the Renaissance liked to have security! In the summer of 1510, the little Federico came to Rome accordingly, with a numerous retinue, of whom our Grossino was one; the young prince was lodged in the Belvedere, near the Pope, and no pains were spared that he should receive a most brilliant education, according to the ideas of the times.<sup>1</sup> He did not see his parents again until after the death of Julius II.

The Rovere took a great liking for Federico. He sent for him to Bologna, and had him there for some months; and Bibbiena and Molza were at this time the young captive's instructors. At Rome the Pope took him out on his shooting parties and excursions into the country, had him recite verses at meals, and played with him at backgammon (*al giuoco di triche-trache*), sometimes until three or four o'clock in the morning. He regretted that he had no niece whom the boy might marry later. "His

<sup>1</sup> A very singular education, however! See, among others, the letter of Stazio Gadio to the Marchese di Gonzaga (Jan. 11, 1513; Luzio, pp. 550, 551) in regard to a supper presided over by the Signora Albina, *cortesana romana*, at which Federico was present, at the time scarcely twelve years of age.

Holiness says that he will have Raffaello make the portrait of signor Federico in a room where he himself is depicted life-size, with the beard,"<sup>1</sup> writes Grossino on the 16th of August, the day before the Pope's attack of illness. Julius II. had never been a docile and patient invalid; he was less so than ever during this attack in August, 1511, following upon so many and such heavy shocks. He raged, he swore; he spoke of pitching out of the window medicines and doctor, "Jews, *maranes*, and miscreants." He refused to eat, and grew so violent that all about him were in despair. Only the boy Federico could pacify him, could reason with him, could persuade him to take a *consumato* "for his sake and for the sake of our Lady of Loretto." *Sunt lachrymæ rerum*: it is pathetic to consider this *pontefice terribile*, who in his extreme anguish believed nothing true but the smile, and was

<sup>1</sup> The fresco of the *Decretals*. This fresco having been painted some time after the *School of Athens*, it is plainly useless to seek the boy's portrait either in the kneeling child of the group surrounding Bramante (as Vasari has done), or in the boy behind Averroës (as Cavalcaselle conjectures). Manifestly Julius II. did not follow up the suggestion of which Grossino speaks in his letter of August 16th but never mentions again in all his correspondence. It is certain, on the contrary, that, at the request of Isabella Gonzaga, Raffaello began, in January, 1513, a portrait in oils of Federico, in the costume which he wore on the occasion of the opening of the Lateran Council; but on the 19th of February (Julius II. was then in his last hours,—he died on the 21st) the painter returned the costume to Grossino, and excused himself from going on with the work, "not having now the head (*il cervello*) for it" (Luzio, pp. 548-549). It appears, however, that later, Raffaello finished the portrait, and that it made part in the seventeenth century of the collection of King Charles I. of England. (See Cávalcaselle, *Raffaello*, vol. ii., pp. 184, 185.)

influenced by nothing but the persuasions, of a boy of eleven, his prisoner, his hostage! "At Rome," writes Grossino to Isabella Gonzaga, August 23rd, "everybody is saying that if the Pope recovers, it will be due to signor Federico."

He did recover. On the 30th and 31st of August, he was able to hear music performed in his bedroom "and enjoyed it as never before in his life." He gained strength from day to day, and soon the cardinals began to tremble.<sup>1</sup> "They began dying as he grew well," wrote the Venetian prothonotary, Lippomano; but neither then nor afterwards—it is due to Julius II. to say—did he seek out the authors of the Capitoline farce or think of taking revenge upon them.<sup>2</sup> He thought only of his great enterprise against Louis XII., so unluckily postponed by his illness in the month of August; at last, on the 5th of October, he was able to celebrate mass in person at Santa Maria del Popolo, and announce the formation of the Holy League. The League declared itself against the *conciliabulum* of Pisa, and engaged to restore

<sup>1</sup> The following is an extract from the incredible letter addressed, September 7, 1511, to the Marchesa di Mantua by Lodovico Canossa, bishop of Tricarico: "The death of Pecotino [a little dog which the bishop had given to Isabella] has grieved me much; I had, however, hoped, since, to console myself by the death of another dog, much less useful to the world. To-day I am all the more saddened because one is dead, and the other alive" (Luzio, pp. 527-528). Lodovico Canossa is one of the principal interlocutors in the *Cortegiano* of Castiglione.

<sup>2</sup> Even Pompeo Colonna was not deprived of his dignities until shortly before the death of Julius II., and then, as a result of new intrigues and bravados.

to the Holy See all places belonging to it, "directly or indirectly." The treaty received the full signature of the Catholic King and of the Republic of Saint Mark; the adhesion of the King of England was secured; and, as a piquant detail, the right to enter the new alliance was expressly reserved for the Emperor, the invaluable Maximilian, who, at this moment, was dreaming of assuming the triple crown himself! Julius II. well knew his man: "He is as simple as a new-born child," the Pope had said of him, in 1509, talking with the Venetian ambassador.

France, invaded on the south by the Spaniards, on the north by the English, and her military force in Italy crushed under the simultaneous attack of the Swiss, the Venetians, the troops of the Pope, and those of the (Spanish) Viceroy of Naples,—such was the extremely captivating picture which presented itself to the mind of Julius II. in this month of October, 1511.

The opening of the campaign was, however, far from being in accordance with his expectations. The Swiss first gave him the slip, as they had done in the preceding year, notwithstanding all promises given and earnest-money received. Coming over the St. Gothard about the middle of November twenty thousand strong, they had advanced unopposed as far as the gates of Milan; but here, gained by French gold, they alleged a lack of cannon, pay in arrears, the frightful state of the roads, the rigour of the season; and, returning by the way of Bellinzona (December 27th), recrossed the Alps. The Venetians, on their part, instead of making all speed to join the

Swiss as soon as the latter appeared in Lombardy, lost precious time disputing with the Imperialists the possession of some paltry places in the Veronese. Henry VIII. of England repudiated, it is true, very loudly, the *conciliabulum* of Pisa, and declared himself to have a horror of anything which, nearly or remotely, resembled schism (this was the same Henry who later—!). Before, however, breaking the peace, he desired to receive one more payment of the annual pension accorded him by France in virtue of the treaty of Étaples. And, lastly, Ferdinand the Catholic undertook nothing in the Pyrenees; and Cardone, his lieutenant in Naples, did not set out till January, 1512, to join the papal troops in besieging Bentivoglio in Bologna. The horizon darkened more and more around Julius II., and the Romans, always grumblers and fault-finders, predicted a French revenge as sure to come in the spring.

Louis XII. had, in truth, played a waiting game, during the first months of the Holy League; and in December, 1511, he had preferred to use gold rather than steel to send the Swiss back to their frontier at Bellinzona; but this did not mean that he proposed to make any concession to the haughty demands of a coalition which showed itself in so little hurry to act. He went on with the work of his Council or *conciliabulum*; he coined a medal with the ominous legend: *Perdam Babylonis nomen!* and he had his paid writers hard at work to influence public opinion. During the carnival of 1512, at the moment when the French army in Italy was about to resume the offensive against the papal troops, the *Enfants sans souci*

greatly diverted the Parisian public by the representation of a Morality having for title *l'Homme obstiné*, and for author Pierre Gringoire, pamphleteer in ordinary to his Most Christian Majesty.<sup>1</sup> *L'Homme obstiné* was Julius II., introduced in person upon the stage; he was attended by Simony and Hypocrisy, while Punishment held a thunderbolt suspended over his head. On the great stage of the war, this rôle of Punishment fell to a new actor, a young man of twenty-three who at once showed himself a hero, and, according to Guicciardini's brilliant *mot*, "was a great general before ever being a soldier." Gaston de Foix did not wait for spring before raising the siege of Bologna (February 5, 1512), inflicting a terrible vengeance upon revolted Brescia (March 19th), and triumphing and dying in the epic day of Ravenna (April 11th).

Two leagues distant from the old capital of Theodoric and Galla Placidia, in a valley through which flow the sluggish waters of the Ronco, a small monument which is still called *la colonna de' Francesi*, marks the scene of this memorable battle, the most sanguinary that Italy had known since the fall of the Empire. One-third of the victorious army and two-thirds of the vanquished perished on that plain on Easter Day, 1512. It is said that at a certain moment in the frightful *mêlée*, the formidable artillery of the Duke of Ferrara was playing alike upon French and Spaniards, friends and foes, and that, upon his attention being called to the fact, this valued ally of

<sup>1</sup> We have many other of his lucubrations against Julius II. ; one of these, dated 1510, is entitled : *The Chase of the Stag of Stags* ; alluding to the well-known formula : *Servus Servorum Dei*.











Louis XII. replied: "No matter; the enemy is quite as much on one side as the other." Ariosto visited the battle-field the day after the carnage: "I came where the fields were red with barbaric and Latin blood,—I saw the dead lying so crowded that for many miles one could not walk without stepping upon them."<sup>1</sup>

The flower of French chivalry was mown down that day by death, and Gaston de Foix among the number. "The King gained the battle, but the *noblesse* of France lost it," Bayard wrote bitterly. On the side of the Holy League almost all the famous captains were made prisoners: Fabrizio Colonna, Pedro Navarro, Juan Cardone, Pignatelli, Bitonto, and the Marchese di Pescara—the husband of Vittoria Colonna,—destined himself to be later the conqueror of Francis I. at Pavia. Among the prisoners were also the new legate of Romagna (in the place of Alidosi), Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici, one year later to be known as Leo X. He was present at the action in his priestly attire, mounted on a white Turkish horse: it was upon this same horse that he was pleased to make his famous *possesso* in 1513,<sup>2</sup> and to be painted thus by Raffaello in the fresco of *Attila*.

<sup>1</sup> *Eleg.*, ix., 37-43:

*Io venni dove le campagne rosse  
Eran del sangue barbaro e latino,  
Che fiera stella dianzi a furor mosse;  
E vidi un morto all' altro sì vicino,  
Che, senza premer lor, quasi il terreno  
A molte miglia non dava il cammino.*

<sup>2</sup> The *possesso* is the Pope's going in state, after his coronation in St. Peter's, to take possession of the Lateran Basilica, the seat of the Roman episcopate. The *possesso* of 1513 (on the 4th of April,

At Rome the alarm was indescribable; the cardinals went in a body (April 4th) to implore the Pope, upon their knees, to accept the conditions of France. "His Holiness has done much," they said, "for the exaltation of the Church and the liberty of Italy, and his fame will remain imperishable. But in this pious enterprise, the will of God has been contrary to him and has manifested itself by signs which cannot be misunderstood. To persevere longer against the will of Heaven would be to bring about the total ruin of the Church. It belongs to the Lord alone to take care of His Spouse; may his Holiness, following the precepts of the Gospel, deign to put an end to his own anguish and to that of his entire court, which desires and cries out for peace only." The members of the Sacred College, continues Guicciardini, insisted also upon the gravity of the situation at home, the increasing turbulence of the barons, and the evil disposition of the populace, growing worse day by day. From the middle of the month of March, in fact, the Pope had deemed it prudent to take up his residence in the castle of Sant' Angelo. He was compelled to promise that he would open negotiations with the Most Christian King: but he immediately assured the envoys of Spain and of Venice that he sought only to gain time, and should remain firmly attached to the League.

It was but a few weeks after this great remonstrance

the first anniversary of the battle of Ravenna) is famous on account of the extraordinary display made by Leo X. The Turkish horse ridden in this procession reposed forever after in the Pope's stables and was never again mounted. (See Cancellieri, *I possessi*, 1513.)

of the cardinals that Louis XII. had not a single village left in the peninsula, and Julius II. assumed the title of liberator of Italy.<sup>1</sup> The Obstinate Man's grand combination, which had failed so notably in the autumn of 1511, had had wonderful success in the spring of the following year. Twenty thousand Swiss again came down from their mountains, but this time into the territory of Verona, far from the tempting gold of the French, and into the midst of Venetians, eager to hurl them upon the enemy (May, 1512). Not to be cut off from its base of operations in the north, the army of Gaston de Foix, now commanded by La Palice, was obliged in all haste to abandon Romagna and fall back into Lombardy; soon after (in June) it abandoned in turn this latter province to rush, blindly and shattered, to the defence of French soil, invaded in Navarre by the Spaniards and in Normandy and Guienne by the English. "Since France was France," wrote at this time De Blois, an imperial agent, to Margaret, Governess of the Netherlands, "never were French troops so amazed: they had marvellous great fear of destruction if the Emperor should abandon them."

The sudden and complete breaking down of the French power in Italy, on the very morrow of the brilliant victory at Ravenna, seemed a kind of marvel or prodigy and made Paris de Grassis think about the Angel of the Lord who came to destroy in a night the whole camp of Sennacherib, that the holy city might be preserved from "the arrows,

<sup>1</sup> *His omnibus magna felicitate gestis, Julius pontifex liberatæ a Gallis Italiæ nomen prætulit* (Ciaconius, *Vitæ Pontificum*, vol. iii., p. 232).

moats, and terraces of the Assyrians." The familiar *Journal* of the master of ceremonies at the Vatican court is here valuable testimony, more conclusive in my judgment than chronicles and panegyrics of the epoch, because of its simplicity and spontaneousness. The curial recorder who, up to this time, has solely taken note of audiences, functions, and official solemnities, and passes silently over the most important historic facts,—the insipid pedant, who knows of no other questions than those concerning copes and rochets, and the number of crosses and candles to be used in different *funzioni*,—this scribe of the protocol and inventory, suddenly changes his style, his method, his nature, when he reaches the chapter *De Gallis expulsis*. He exults, he triumphs; he utters cries of savage joy at each disaster of these Gauls, "barbarians, profaners of the temple, scourges of Christendom"; he is never done about the uprisings, the rejoicing, the illuminations, which have everywhere marked the retreat of Gaston's army. For, of course, with all these disasters, France instantly lost her allies in the peninsula; Bologna once again expelled the Bentivogli, after having so many times expelled and then restored them; Milan again welcomed the name of Sforza, lately so abhorred; and Genoa, that of the much-reviled Fregoso. "And it is the nature of this people of Italy thus *to take delight in the stronger*," Commynes had said, the great judge of men and of nations, who had been dead precisely a year at this date. Even the Duke of Ferrara is ready with his allegiance to *the stronger*: furnished with a safe-conduct he went (June 23rd) to seek absolution at Rome.

The unexpected presence (July 4th) in the Eternal City of him who had been excommunicated since 1510, did not fail to produce a lively sensation, and to keep curiosity on the alert. It was known that Alfonso d'Este was one of the boldest soldiers of the time,—to him, even, had been attributed the honours of the battle at Ravenna,<sup>1</sup>—but it was also known that no man had done so much as he to draw upon himself the hatred of the Rovere. He was the son-in-law of Alexander VI., was under the protection of Louis XII., and for two years had had his large share in all the defeats and humiliations of the Pope. Men reminded each other that it was he who lately had melted down the statue of Julius II. at Bologna, the work of Michelangelo, into a huge gun, had baptised it the *Giulia*, and had placed it at the entrance of his castle in Ferrara. Accordingly, the Romans promised themselves an altogether extraordinary spectacle, on the day of the Duke's absolution; he was to be scourged, it was said, before the door of the Basilica, kneeling, a rope round his neck, clad in the penitent's shirt. But the crowd which, from early morning (July 9th) had filled the vast piazza di

<sup>1</sup>In the famous strophe upon this battle (*Orlando furioso*, iii., 55), Ariosto does not even mention the name of Gaston de Foix, attributing the victory solely to Alfonso d'Este :

*Costui sarà, col senno e colla lancia,  
Ch' avrà l'onor, nei campi di Romagna,  
D'aver dato all' esercito di Francia  
La gran vittoria contra Giulio e Spagna.  
Nuoteranno i destrier fin alla pancia  
Nel sangue uman per tutta la campagna :  
Ch' a seppellire il popol verrà manco  
Tedesco, Ispano, Greco, Italo e Franco.*



San Pietro, was cruelly disappointed in its expectations; the ceremony took place within the palace, with closed doors, and in the mildest form which was possible. The political question was more difficult to settle, for Julius II. would abate nothing from the rights of the Holy See over the Ferrarese territory: "I have given the Duke a safe-conduct for himself, but not for his States," he said to the Venetian envoy, Foscari. A commission of six cardinals was appointed to treat upon this delicate point with Alfonso d'Este; meanwhile the latter occupied his leisure, or beguiled his anxiety, by examining the curiosities of the city—among other things "the rooms of Pope Alexander, which are all very handsome," and were doubtless of special interest to the husband of Lucrezia Borgia. He also went one day with the Pope's permission (and it is Grossino again who gives us this interesting detail) to visit the Sistine Chapel, and "the lord duke remained a long time upon the scaffolding, conversing with Michelangelo, and could not satisfy his eyes with gazing at the figures."<sup>1</sup> It would be most interesting to know upon what subjects the two conversed, in this long interview! Did the gruff artist ask the illustrious visitor about his big gun, the *Giulia*?

<sup>1</sup> Luzio, pp. 540, 541. Grossino goes on to say: Il signor Federico [who accompanied his uncle, Alfonso d'Este, in this excursion] seeing that his Excellency remained above so long, took the Duke's gentlemen meantime to see the Pope's rooms, and those which Raffaello da Urbino is painting." This makes a distinction between the apartment in which Julius II. lived and the Stanze. From the general tenor of the valuable correspondence edited by Luzio it appears that Julius II. lived in the Belvedere, and occasionally in Sant' Angelo.

At the end of two weeks Alfonso d'Este suddenly took fright and fled from Rome, protected by the Colonna princes (July 19th). He asserted that the Pope had designs upon his liberty, which Julius II. always denied; but after an act like this, further aggravated by the Colonna intervention, the pontiff had no further consideration for the man whose cruel, implacable heart he now so well understood.<sup>1</sup> We have no exact knowledge what the fugitive did during the three months that followed his escape, or by what roads he returned into his States; a letter from Ariosto, his companion, tells us only that, the first of October, he was hidden somewhere in the neigh-

<sup>1</sup> In the letter in cipher, written by the Duke to his brother, the famous Cardinal Ippolito, two days before his flight from Rome and giving hint of it already, there is not the slightest suggestion of threatened liberty. Alfonso speaks only of the exorbitant territorial requisitions of the Pope, and of his demand that *Ferrante should be given up to him*. Ferrante was the hapless young illegitimate brother whose eyes the Cardinal had caused to be put out, because they had been too much praised by a lady of the palace to whom the Cardinal himself was paying court. The blinded youth sought revenge, conspired, was seized and imprisoned (with another brother also) in the donjon of the ducal palace. Julius II., Ferrante's godfather, demanded liberty for the young man, and that he should be allowed to come to Rome to live. "I will give up neither Ferrara nor Ferrante," writes Alfonso, July 17, 1512 (Cappelli, *Lettere di Lodovico Ariosto*, Milan, 1887, p. cxiv.). On the other side, Catanei, writing to the Marquis of Mantua, July 27th, gives this account of the Pope's words at an audience which had been granted him: "Had I wished to seize him [Alfonso d'Este] who is there that could have prevented it? If we could not come to an agreement, it was my will to send him back to Bologna, and thence to Ferrara. The first thing that I asked of him was to give me his brothers; it was believed by some that they were already dead [that Alfonso had already put them to death] . . ." Luzio, p. 541.

bourhood of Florence. The lively and brilliant singer "of ladies and knights, of arms and of amours," decidedly had bad luck with the great Ligurian Pope. Ariosto had been sent to the papal court repeatedly in 1509 and 1510, in the interests of Duke Alfonso and of his brother, Cardinal Ippolito, but neither the causes nor the persons in whose behalf he pleaded were of a nature to win the favour of the Rovere; finally it was signified to the poet one day (August, 1510), that he must depart without delay, under penalty of being cast into the Tiber.<sup>1</sup> Returning two years later to the inhospitable banks of this river in attendance upon his master seeking absolution, he was obliged to accompany the Duke in his precipitate flight, and share the perils mentioned in the poet's curious letter of October 1, 1512, to Prince Luigi Gonzaga: "I have come out of dens and thickets, and am again in human surroundings. Of the dangers incurred I cannot yet speak: *animus meminisse horret luctuque refugit*. As for me, I have not recovered from my fears, being all the time tracked and eagerly pursued by spies, from whom God preserve me! I have just passed the night in a place of refuge near Florence with the noble mask (*col nobile mascherato*), my ear on the alert, my heart beating violently."<sup>2</sup> The Duke was still wearing his disguise

<sup>1</sup> Letter of Cardinal Ippolito, dated Massa, Aug. 31, 1510: *Il mio gentilhomio* (Ariosto) *non solamente pottete avere gratia o conclusione alcuna da sua Santita, ma fu minazato d'essere butato in fiume se non se le toleva denante.* (Campori, *Notizie per la vita di Ariosto*, Modena, 1871, p. 43.) On the different missions of the poet to Julius II., see Cappelli, *loc. cit.*, p. xxxvii. *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Letters of Ariosto, ed. Cappelli, 1887, p. 23.









when he arrived in Ferrara (October 14th). He there learned that the troops of the Holy See had in the meantime seized the larger part of his territory; nothing remained to him but his capital, with Comacchio and Argenta.

More fortunate than the Duke of Ferrara, Maximilian, the other ally of Louis XII., had easily succeeded in making his peace with the Pope. From May 17th he was virtually one of the members of the Holy League, and hence shared in a hostility more or less open towards the Most Christian King. The Pope was extremely indulgent and complaisant towards the Emperor, not even hesitating to sacrifice Venetian interests to him, and adjudge to him many places on the Venetian mainland. Julius II. was perfectly aware what a fascination the word "Emperor" still exercised over men's minds, and especially how needful that name would be for success in the Lateran Council; for the Rovere had faithfully kept the pledge given to the Christian world the previous year, and the battle of Ravenna had only retarded for three weeks the solemn opening of this great œcumenical assembly, promised by the bull *Sacrosanctæ* for the spring of 1512. Gathered, however, in the midst of the general political storm, whose ravages extended to the very gates of Rome,—gathered outside of France and Germany and in hostility to these two Powers, the august assembly of the Lateran was composed almost exclusively of Italian prelates, and could scarcely assume to represent the universal Church. The situation changed materially when the Emperor Maximilian declared himself willing to become a member of the Holy



League; the same day (May 19th), the Council, which had gone no further than its second session, was declared prorogued till the month of November, in order to give time for the "transmontane and transmarine" members to arrive, and by early autumn the synod of Julius II. had already been recognised by all the Catholic countries except France. Spain, England, Scotland, Poland, Hungary, Norway, Denmark, and the lesser Powers had successively signified adhesion and obedience; Matthew Lang, bishop of Gurk, was the last to present himself, representing Germany and the Emperor Maximilian.

The bishop of Gurk—*il Gurcense*, as the Italians called him—was the great curiosity of Rome in the month of November, as Duke Alfonso of Ferrara had been in July. Minister and negotiator-in-chief of Maximilian for the affairs of the peninsula, Matthew Lang had already made himself known in Italy by a hauteur and pride which often amounted to insolence. The preceding year at Bologna he had declared it beneath his dignity to meet with a commission of cardinals; representing, he said, the most august sovereign in the world, he could treat only with the Vicar of Christ in person, in whose presence he proposed to remain seated and with head covered; and he had returned to Mantua without taking leave of the Pope: *Barbarus est, barbare egit*, wrote Paris de Grassis, in his private *Journal*. The bishop now came to Rome to make, in his Emperor's name, *amende honorable* for much past boasting and disrespect; and Julius II. found it piquant to lavish upon this ambassador, so infatuated

with his own importance, honours "really princely."<sup>1</sup> He received him seated on the throne, in full consistory; he created him cardinal, indulged him in the whim of retaining his shocking costume of Teutonic knight during the greatest solemnities, to the profound consternation of the master of ceremonies and of many church dignitaries. Poets and rhetoricians vied with each other in celebrating the presence of *il Gurcense* in the Eternal City; there were illuminations and popular rejoicings, feasts and banquets with spectacles and interludes varied and brilliant.

"Yesterday," wrote Stazio Gadio, on the 11th of November to the Marquis of Mantua, "during the dinner of his Holiness, a play was represented in which appeared Apollo and the Muses, singing the praises of the Pope, the Emperor, and *il Gurcense*. Then his Holiness and the ambassador crowned two poets, one a Parmesan, the other a Roman. An educated blind man (*uno cieco dotto*) also sang Latin verses with an accompaniment of the lyre." . . . Involuntarily one thinks of Homer in the *Parnassus* of the Vatican Stanza. Many people felt that the Rovere went too far in this complaisance towards "the barbarian," the son of an Augsburg burgher; but before long the reward of all his amiability appeared, and every one was obliged to acknowledge it to be splendid. It was on the 3rd of December that the Council resumed in the Basilica of S. John Lateran its work, interrupted since the month of May. The Pope, the cardinals, the

<sup>1</sup> Pierius Valerianus, *De honoribus* . . . *Gurcensi Urbem ingredienti habetis*, Ap. Freher, *Rer. Germ. Script.*, vol. ii., p. 293 *et seq.*

seventy-two bishops, and "the orators" of the Powers, were all present. Upon the *ambo* appeared Fedra Inghirami, of formidable bulk and intelligent face. With that ringing and musical voice which Erasmus of Rotterdam had so greatly admired, the Pope's librarian, who was also the secretary of the œcumenical synod, read aloud a letter wherein the Emperor declared his full and entire adhesion to the Lateran Council, and his formal condemnation of the *conciliabula* arranged by France at Tours and at Pisa; the good Maximilian said his *mea culpa*, and smote upon the breast of his accomplice of yesterday. Matthew Lang at once arose and amplified upon the palinode of his august master. The effect was immense; the whole assembly was carried away with enthusiasm and intoned the *Te Deum*, the song of joy and victory. It was, in fact, the most brilliant victory that the papacy had gained since the time of Innocent III.

The Vatican Stanze give us three portraits of the Ligurian Pope, all executed in the last twenty months of his reign. In the fresco of the *Decretals* Raffaello represents Julius II. immediately after his return to Rome in July, 1511; and the sad, crushed look of "the man in the cloak" tells us clearly that it is the morrow of the catastrophe of Bologna, and of the outrageous challenge of Pisa. The *Mass of Bolsena* shows us the head of the Holy League, still grave and full of care, but already rising above adversity, confident of the justice of his cause, saluting upon his knees a great miracle which is performed under his eyes; and it is not without intention (nor unnoticed by Mæcenæ) that the painter has placed

behind the pontiff his Swiss Guards, those sons of Helvetia who were the true saviours of the Holy See after the battle of Ravenna: *Defensores ecclesiasticæ libertatis*,—such is the title that a brief dated July 12, 1512, confers upon them for all time. Finally, the fresco of Heliodorus shows us the Rovere in full strength and power; his look is masterful, his gesture imperious; he seems to be borne in triumph upon the *sedia gestatoria* for the *Te Deum* of the Lateran. He has crushed the schism of Pisa; he has compelled the recognition of his Lateran Council; he has delivered Italy, and driven “the barbarians” across the Alps; he has regained the Patrimony of S. Peter, has first chastened, then preserved—*percussit ac sanavit*—the Republic of S. Mark; he has restored the Medici to Florence and the Sforze to Milan; he is indeed “the lord and master of *this world's game*.”

## CHAPTER XIV

### UNDER THE SISTINE VAULT (1508-1511)

#### I

THE well-known sonnet addressed by Michelangelo to one Giovanni da Pistoja<sup>1</sup>—a melancholy grotesque—marks a day of vexation and discouragement; and many of these days the painter knew under the vault of the Sistine Chapel. He began by a quarrel with Bramante, on the subject of an unlucky scaffolding which the great architect had devised and set up for him; this the painter quickly condemned, and replaced by an entirely new and singularly ingenious construction. “Michelangelo required a complete deck the size of the chapel, about which he could move freely; and as the windows were below its level, he had to provide for the passage of light, and for the temporary removal of part of the deck, to allow him to examine his work from the chapel floor.”<sup>2</sup>

Scarcely was he installed in his hanging studio (October, 1508), when he came near abandoning the work completely; an unaccountable dampness came out of the plaster upon which he painted, and he at once fell into

<sup>1</sup> *Rime di Michelangelo*, ed. Guasti, p. 158. The sonnet in autograph has been preserved; on the margin is a sketch representing a man painting a ceiling, from which he hangs suspended by ropes.

<sup>2</sup> Heath Wilson, *Life of Michelangelo*, p. 119.

despair. He hastened to the Pope: "Your Holiness sees that I am not made for this art!" The Pope despatched to the spot Sangallo the architect, who at once perceived that the excessive moisture of the plaster was the cause of the difficulty. Was it in consequence of this accident that Buonarroti became disaffected towards his Tuscan *frescanti*? He had summoned to Rome a group of Florentine artists, men more or less renowned,—Granaccio, an early friend, Bugiardini, Jacopo di Sandro, Jacopo l'Indaco, Agnolo di Donnino, Aristotile,—and had signed formal agreements with them: they were to aid him with their experience in mural painting, and share with him in the projected work. Men of great genius seem sometimes to be singularly simple-minded; certainly there was an instance of this when Michelangelo for a moment believed that his art, or his character, rendered possible any collaboration whatsoever. One morning (January, 1509), the *frescanti* found the chapel closed; closed, also, the dwelling of the master; and they sagaciously concluded that there was nothing else for them but to return to Florence.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Heath Wilson (p. 155 *et seq.*) is, however, quite unable to believe that the immense labour of the Sistine ceiling could have been completed by one man in the space of four years: he supposes that after this first misadventure Michelangelo must have obtained the help of other artists more obscure and less antipathetic. But Buonarroti's correspondence makes not the faintest allusion to anything of this kind, while there is frequent reference to the affair of Granaccio and the rest. And however humble in the beginning these supposed collaborators may have been, they would not have remained unknown after the immense fame of the Sistine paintings became a fact. The execution of such a task by a man

Henceforth the master renounces all aid and assistance, and devotes himself to his task, with that mixture of ardour and discouragement which makes this period of his life a spectacle so singular and so pathetic. He begins at the end, at the Deluge, working in an inverse order to that which the spectator now follows in looking at the ceiling. He goes from south to north, from the chapel entrance to its opposite extremity, where stands the altar. He advances by sections, by wide strips, each containing a part of the ceiling and with it the adjacent parts of the two lateral slopes<sup>1</sup>; and, as he thus advances in the work, his art grows bolder and throws off all restraint: in the whole vast composition there is nothing — even to the decorative figures, tranquil and symmetrical at first — which does not finally awaken to life and motion, to the expression of passionate feeling, to the most strenuous muscular effort.

working alone, in a space of time comparatively brief, is extraordinary, without doubt: but the man himself was extraordinary, and his letters during this time testify to the marvellous energy he was able to put forth. It will be, of course, understood that the master always had with him in the Sistina *garzoni* in sufficient number (three or four, I suppose) to prepare his plaster, grind his colours, etc.

<sup>1</sup> See, on this subject, the fine study of H. Wölflin, in Janitschek's *Repertoire*, vol. xiii., p. 264, *et seq.* By a common mistake, Michelangelo is represented as executing first the historic subjects of the ceiling, then the Prophets and Sibyls of the lateral slopes, and lastly the decorative figures; but these three classes of subjects he painted simultaneously, in sections. Only the *Ancestors of Christ*, in the lunettes and tympana of the windows, were executed separately, and this after the completion of the vault, properly so-called.

It is interesting, also, to notice that the prophetic design for the tomb of Julius II. still haunts the painter and furnishes him with many a theme for the vault: the constructive arrangement of the entablature all around the ceiling, the distribution of surfaces by means of projecting pilasters and niches, with *putti* serving as caryatides, etc., are the same here as in the famous sketch of the *sepoltura* which is preserved in the Cabinet of Designs in the Uffizi.<sup>1</sup> As to the *frescante's* technique, so hard at first to acquire, Buonarroti is not slow in gaining it and using it with unequalled mastery. With all its incessant alternations in light and shade, his painting presents a harmony in colour, a beautiful and tranquil *ensemble*, that we do not always find in the Stanza of the Segnatura, or in that of Heliodorus.

At the end of three years of eager, feverish labour,—of which a very clear impression is given by the sonnet to Giovanni da Pistoja and by a few letters which Michelangelo addressed to his own family,—the vault, properly so called, was nearly completed; it remained only to paint the lunettes and tympana of the windows (the *Ancestors of Christ*). It was at this moment that the catastrophe of Bologna brought Julius II. abruptly back to Rome (June 27, 1511), after an absence of ten months. Neither yesterday's disasters nor to-morrow's perils hindered the Rovere from occupying himself immediately with his various artistic enterprises. In July he posed to Raffaello for his portrait in the last fresco of that Camera della

<sup>1</sup> Uffizi, Cabinet of Designs, No. 608 (first scheme for the monument of Julius II).

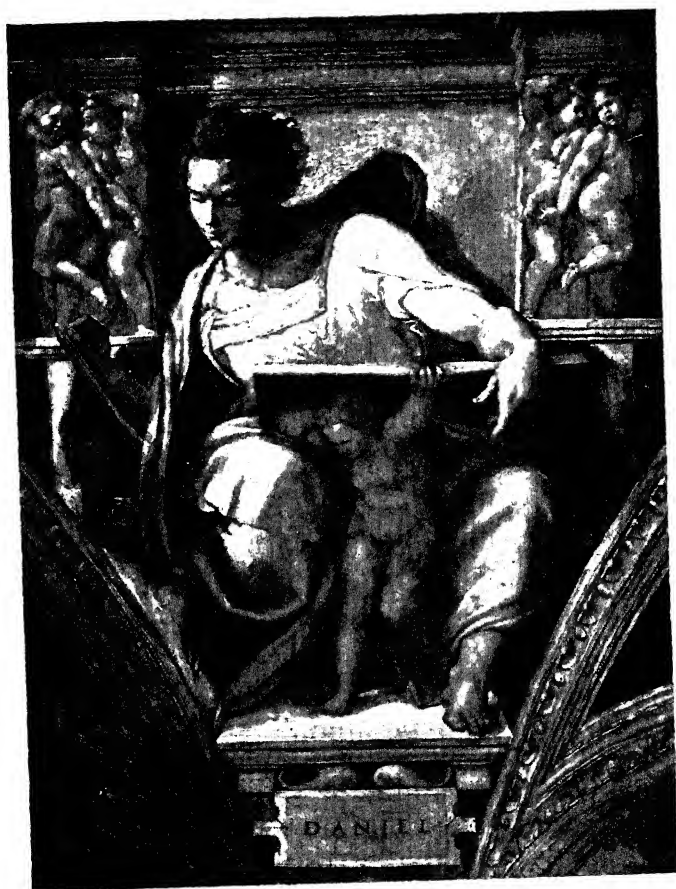


Segnatura whose splendours he was eager to show to the world. Could the Sistine Chapel also be opened to the public?—opened, at least, for a few days, and on occasion of a great function? That Michelangelo, with what we know of his temper, should have yielded to the Pope's wish and taken down the "deck," which he would again need for the completion of his work, may well surprise us. It is possible that he dared not refuse a last gratification to the worn old man who seemed to be nearing his end; perhaps, also, a secret desire to outshine "the Urbinate" and his Camera, had something to do with this condescension. However, the fact stands that on the 15th of August, 1511, Paris de Grassis could note in his *Journal*: "Vigil and festa of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin. The Pope was present at vespers and at high mass celebrated in the great palatine chapel. For this chapel is dedicated to the Assumption, and the Pope visited it devotionally as well as to see the paintings recently uncovered." The following day, all Rome crowded into the palatine chapel.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> M. Eugène Müntz is the first person who has called attention to the two following passages in the *Journal* of Paris de Grassis, relating to the paintings of the Sistine vault: 1. *In Vigilia et Die assumptionis 1511. Pontifex venit ad Capellam . . . ut picturas novas ibidem noviter detectas videret.* 2. *In Vigilia OO. sanctorum 1512. Hodie primum Capella nostra pingi finita aperta est.* Thus the first, and *partial*, unveiling of Michelangelo's frescos took place in the week of the Assumption, 1511, a little more than three years from the time when the cartoons for the ceiling were begun; and the final opening of the chapel, a year later, in the week of All Saints' Day (1512). These two dates, so precise and authentic, from the master of ceremonies of the papal Court, ought, in my judgment, to put an end to all the confused accounts









That which, it seems to me, must have been the first thing in this immense composition to strike these earliest visitors was the employment of the human figure for purposes as manifold as they were dissimilar. This world of Michelangelo recognised but one kingdom, the human, to the exclusion of all the other kingdoms of nature; man here absorbs into himself and takes the place of all the other phenomena of the world. Neither sky, nor horizon, nor landscape, nor edifice is here: only the human figure in every colour—flesh tints, bronze, or camaïeu,—and in every form: here, incarnation of the most transcendent

given on this subject by various authors, both ancient and modern, from Vasari and Condivi to Heath Wilson, Springer, and Wölflin, Carl Frey alone excepted. It is also in accordance with these two dates that we must set right the conjectural chronology of Milanesi for many letters of Michelangelo relating to the Sistine. The one, notably (p. 23), addressed by the painter to his father, in which he says that he *has finished the chapel* and that he shall not come home for *All Saints' Day*, cannot manifestly be of the year 1509, but belongs to October, 1512.

The question recurs—what part of the frescos was finished, at the time when they were first shown, in 1511? Common sense at once suggests that the part upon which the painter had been at work for three years and a half must be much the more important than that which was, after this, completed in the space of a year or thirteen months. Michelangelo himself says, in his famous letter to Fattucci (ed. Milanesi, p. 426 *seq.*), that, at the time when, to obtain money, he sought the Pope in the midst of his army at Bologna (late September, 1510), *la volta era quasi finita*, and that on his return to Rome he began making the cartoons *per le teste, e le faccie attorno di detta capella di Sisto*. These last words can apply to nothing else but the lunettes and tympana of the windows: it was a part distinct from the vault itself,—a part for which, before 1511, he had not even made the cartoons. It will later appear that this part (the *Ancestors of Christ*) differs essentially, in style and in execution from all the rest of the work.

ideas; there, a mere theme for bracket and pedestal, a pretext for ornament and arabesque; man, as God in the Jehovah, as spirit in the Prophets and Sibyls, as hero in the Biblical personages, as plant in the colossi climbing and clinging along the arches of the windows, as stone in the *putti* in flat tints and the child-caryatides, as hooks in the *ignudi*, from whose hands hang garlands with medallions. To Buonarroti, the human figure was always the absolute form, and the sole means of expression in all things and in every occurrence.

Not less extraordinary in this painting and even more bewildering, if possible, must have appeared the evident intention of avoiding the entire sum of types, symbols, emblems, and conventions of Christian art, as it had developed through a long series of generations and under the hand of so many illustrious masters. Here were angels without wings, saints without halos, God the Father without crown or globe, fantastic draperies which were neither the ideal costume, nor yet the realistic clothing of the earlier schools. Michelangelo renounced entirely the great heritage of the past: the precious store of beliefs, legends, and imagery amassed by the centuries were to him as if they were not; he sought his inspirations and his models outside of the domain which had been explored by his predecessors, in regions unknown and vague, and inaugurated an art which defied all established customs, all received ideas, all consecrated traditions. An art strange, haughty, and arbitrary, completely setting aside beauty and grace and charm, concerning itself only with the colossal, the emotional, and the nude! This

predilection for the nude goes so far as to deny the exiled pair their fig-leaf aprons. The colossal characterises not only prophets and heroes, but, no less, figures of secondary importance or even purely decorative. Little connection can be traced, generally speaking, between the emotional bearing or gesture of the personages, and their character or function. Why, for example, this displeased air of Ezekiel, this impetuous and impossible aspect of the Libyan Sibyl? Why this tension, this contortion of the superb youths with their Herculean limbs, the *ignudi*, whose sole effort is to hold up the end of a garland? A Mantegna and a Raffaello would have employed for this purpose graceful little genii; a painter of classic date beautiful young girls with long hair. *Putti*, to support enormous marble architraves; athletes, to hold garlands;—was this not a challenge to common sense? And the drapery too, which so rarely follows the lines or movement of the body; so often, on the same figure, is here drawn tight, there puffed out by the wind, now clinging, now flying wide! Most of these giants, sitting so strangely curled up or crouching, keep their place, preserve their balance, only by the boldest of fictions, and were they to rise to their nearly eighteen feet of height, would bring confusion and wreck into their architectural surroundings.

Moreover, no consideration at all for the spectator; no care to give him any point of general effect, or to bring near to him by any foreshortening a painting so far above his head, and in many details<sup>1</sup> so entirely beyond the

<sup>1</sup> Notwithstanding all his enthusiasm for the paintings of the *volta*, Vasari does not fail to slip in a discreet criticism of the



naked eye! Instead, a distribution, no less unusual than eccentric, of the space by means of a simulated architecture, and with it an imaginative decoration,—both adding materially to the already very great disturbance of the senses. The historic scenes appear horizontally on the ceiling, on an unequal scale of size, separated among themselves by the surbased arches of some hypæthral temple, adorned with panting, polychrome statues. The isolated colossi on the slopes of the vault are housed in a monotonous succession of niches, whose caryatides, represented by twenty-four couples of chubby children, form the strangest incongruity with the massive, heavy entablature which is supposed to rest upon their shoulders. In conclusion, how overwhelming the show of human figures; what vast profusion of *putti* and *ignudi*; what disregard of the golden rule of the classic world, that we must sow by handfuls and not by sackfuls!

*Χεῖρὶ μὴ θυλάχῳ σπείρειν. . . .*

Thus brought abruptly (and just from the Segnatura, besides!) into the presence of this work of Buonarroti, the visitors to the Vatican Chapel in the month of August, 1511, would have been very excusable, certainly, had they

absence of *prospettive che scortino* and the lack of *veduta firma*. Bramante had, very early, said to Julius II. that Buonarroti did not know how to execute figures that were to be seen from below and foreshortened (*figure alte e in iscorcio*), "which is quite another thing from painting on a level (*dipingere in terra*)."<sup>1</sup> See Roselli's very curious letter to Michelangelo, May 5, 1506 (Gotti, *Vita*, vol. i., p. 46). Buonarroti could without doubt have executed foreshortened figures quite as well as a Mantegna or a Melozzo: but he scorned the illusion, his instinct as a sculptor opposing it.

made resistance, hardened themselves against it, cried Anathema!—What they did do was to cry: “O miracle!” and Raffaello was not behind the rest in his devotions. He declared his thanks to God that he lived in the time of a Michelangelo, and began at once to follow in his footsteps in the second of the Stanze. The truth is, in this immortal work there was a power, a fascination entirely irresistible. Every man instinctively felt that it was puerile to attempt to use a measuring-line for the immeasurable, and to demand from the Infinite its final causes. From the height of this vault, as from a second burning bush, the Mind—the creator-genius—spoke with a voice of thunder, the voice of Mount Horeb: *Sum qui sum!*

Some present heard in it also a voice from the other world, the voice of Savonarola<sup>1</sup>; and they were not far wrong in this.

In looking over the various and shapeless collections of Savonarola's discourses, one is surprised to see the great place which the Old Testament occupied in the preaching of the famous Dominican. Two or three fragments only have inscriptions from the Gospels; for the rest of the sermons, text and title are always taken from the books of the Jews: there is a series on Genesis; another, on Noah's Ark; another, upon the Prophets, from Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, to Zechariah and Jonah. No Christian orator of the Middle Ages, no mystic of the

<sup>1</sup> *Savonarola, al quale egli [Michelangelo] ha sempre avuta grande affezione, restandogli ancor nella mente la memoria della sua viva voce.*—Condivi, c. lv.

centuries preceding, has been so deeply penetrated, so dominated, so led astray by the Hebraic inspiration; in the acts and words of the great saint of Assisi there is not the faintest trace of a kindred inspiration. And the God of whom Fra Girolamo called himself the messenger was an unknown divinity to the gentle Francis, a God angry and terrible, with his avenging sword already threatening the world—*gladius Domini super terram cito et velociter*.<sup>1</sup> This was an eloquence which could not seek its model in the Sermon on the Mount; rather we find its type in the Levitical imprecations on Mount Ebal! “Old Testament history proves to us the necessity of an approaching chastisement,” Savonarola declared in his sermon on Habakkuk.

From this Old Testament Fra Girolamo drew all his rhetoric; he also drew from it his political ideas and sentiments. To him the ideal government was Judea in the time of Samuel, Judea before the institution of a monarchy. “The people of Israel were governed then as are the people of Florence now: they had neither king nor temporal prince. God sent them a prophet, whom they called judge, who had no authority or power over the people, either of life and death or to give sentence in any matter whatsoever. But they asked counsel from him, and the judge, having prayed to God, gave answer as he was inspired by the Deity. When they obeyed the voice of

<sup>1</sup> A sentence often repeated by Savonarola. In his *Compendium Revelationis*, he says of it: “These words are not taken from the Holy Scriptures, as has been supposed, but *have recently come from Heaven*.”

God, they prospered; when disobedient, they incurred great dangers. . . . Thy government, O Florence, is like that of the judge in Israel." (Sermon for the last day of Advent, 1494.)

It was the great originality—the great fatality, also—of the prior of Saint Mark's, that he felt himself called to continue the race of judges and seers of God's people. In a treatise entitled *De veritate prophetica*, he seeks to demonstrate that God can still, as in ancient Judea, send prophets upon earth, and that he himself, Savonarola, is one of these elect. He appeals constantly to his predictions as having been always fulfilled; and he establishes a mysterious and sometimes very specious connection between the march of events and that of his homilies. "One thing," he says ingenuously, in his *Compendium revelationis*,—"one thing among others strikes with admiration men the most distinguished by their intelligence and learning. From the year 1491 to 1494, I had preached every Advent and every Lent on the book of Genesis, taking it up at each time where I had left off before; I could not, however, reach the chapter on the Deluge until the tribulations had come." On the coming of "the tribulations," that is to say, when Charles VIII.'s descent into Italy was announced, he began at last, in the Lent of 1494, upon this chapter concerning the Deluge, preaching a series of sermons of which thirteen have come down to us. He proposed to construct a refuge for those who were worthy to be saved,—a Noah's Ark,—an ark of Christian virtues. Each day he added "a new plank," a new virtue, to his mystic construction, which was ready on Easter

Day. "Let each hasten to enter the ark of the Lord; the door is still open, but soon it will be too late."

Nothing is more simple and more impressive than the story of this Lent of the year 1494, as related in the contemporary chronicle of Cerretani: "He preached in the church of Santa Reparata [the Cathedral]; and when, at the moment the King of France entered the city, he announced that the ark was closed, the whole assembly amid terror and dismay and outcries went out into the streets, and wandered up and down, silent and half-dead."

Is it by accident, merely, that upon the Sistine ceiling we find the same great themes, Genesis, Noah's Ark, the Prophets of Israel, with which the fiery eloquence of Fra Girolamo had stirred the men of Florence, among them, the young Buonarroti, in the years between 1491 and 1496? And how "the elective affinity" between these two grand and gloomy natures becomes more than ever apparent when we consider Michelangelo's work in its vast range! How the infrequent representations of Christ and the Madonna are lost and disappear in the multitude, sculptured or painted, of Jewish patriarchs, prophets, heroes,—from Adam, Moses, and David, down to the line of Jesse's descendants! This book of the Jews, which the magnificent school of Giotto, faithful in this to its origin at Assisi, has almost never touched,—in which the realists of the century succeeding found chiefly material for *genre* and idyllic painting,—this book animates and fills all Buonarroti's religious art; it gives him his most pathetic narratives, his most tragic and formidable personages; it eclipses from his view the Gospel! The Sistine vault

speaks to you of the Fall, the Deluge, the brazen serpent, the death of Goliath, the punishment of Haman, the vengeance of Judith; it does not speak to you, nor will any of Michelangelo's works speak to you, of the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Nativity, the Woman of Samaria, the Magdalen, the Parables, the Lord's Supper, the disciple "whom Jesus loved,"—those visions of grace and loveliness which cradled the souls of the Italian painters from Cimabue to Raffaello.

Classic antiquity and the sacred books of the Jews were the two great sources of Buonarroti's inspiration, the former for his profane, the latter for his religious art. He saw antiquity in the *Laocoon* and the *Torso*; he read the Old Testament in Savonarola's version and by the light of the martyr's pyre. He created the *Allegories* of the Medici chapel, and the *Genesis* and the *Prophets* of the chapel of the Rovere; the Christ he usually cannot depict, but at once and for all time he fixed the artistic type of the Jehovah.<sup>1</sup>

## II

The palatine chapel of the Vatican still has the same general aspect that it had in the time of its founder, Sixtus IV.: making exception of Michelangelo's colossal work, everything in it bears the imprint of a definite period in

<sup>1</sup> Vasari relates that in his time the Jews in Rome, both men and women, were wont on Saturdays to make a pilgrimage to San Pietro in Vincoli to pray before the statue of Moses. Had not the truth of this story been gravely questioned by Bottari and Cancellini, it would be an interesting trait to add to the Jehovite character of Buonarroti's religious art.

the Quattrocento, namely, the years 1480-1483. The sobriety natural to Roman architecture of this epoch amounts to an extreme aridity in the construction of Giovannino de Dolci,—a vast rectangular nave, where neither profile nor projection of any kind occurs to catch the eye. The long vault entirely lacks articulation and relief; the pavement of *opus Alexandrinum* is likewise very simple in what remains of the original work, and letters and crosses on many of the squares betray the unscrupulous use made of the fragments of Christian tombs that at that time strewed the Vatican hill. The marble tribune for the singers, at the south-west angle of the choir, is by no means imposing nor is the great balustrade which, with its eight pillars having gilded capitals and candelabra, shuts off this choir, crossing the whole width of the nave. A monotonous and almost monochrome decoration simulates, on the immense lateral walls, hangings of gold and silver brocade, separated by semblances of pilasters. But all this poverty is amply redeemed by a continuous suite of frescos above, under the windows, like a majestic frieze with resplendent metopes. The collective work of Botticelli, Cosimo Rosselli, Ghirlandajo, Signorelli, Perugino, and Pinturicchio—this cycle of paintings may be said to sum up the art of the Tuscan and Umbrian masters at its final development, and on the eve of the high Renaissance.

The cycle represents the chief events in the lives of Moses and of Jesus, each episode from the Pentateuch having its pendant or its contrast in one from the Gospel. To the baptism in blood by Zipporah, corresponds, on the opposite wall, the baptism in water by John the











Baptist; to the appearance of Jehovah in the burning bush in the wilderness, Satan's temptation of Christ in the wilderness; to the calling of the people of God on their passage through the Red Sea, the calling of the first disciples on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. Farther on, the Legislation of Sinai has for contrast the Sermon on the Mount; the giving of the keys to Saint Peter is the pendant to the sin and punishment of Korah and his followers; the Last Supper of the Lord corresponds to the last injunctions of Moses.<sup>1</sup>

Mediaeval art constantly made itself the interpreter of these typological associations and relations which the Church has so delighted to establish between the Old Covenant and the New, between the Promise and the Fulfilment,—between, for instance, the Sacrifice of Abraham and the Passion; or the miracle of Jonah and the Resurrection; or the Offering of Abel and the Mass. But nowhere has this parallelism appeared so systematic, so inventive and even refined, as in the Sistine frieze; and it is perhaps permissible to recognise in this the personal and direct suggestion of the first Ligurian Pope,—a great theologian, as is well known, and author of a book entitled *De sanguine Christi*, one of the subtlest and most scholastic treatises of the age. As to the much more original and hitherto unprecedented idea of calling together the

<sup>1</sup> The series originally was continued on the north and south walls. On the north, where is now the *Last Judgment*, were seen, on each side of a great *Assunta*, *Moses in the Bulrushes* and the *Nativity*; and on the south the *Resurrection*, and the *Dispute of the Archangel Michael with Satan for the body of Moses*. (Epistle of S. Jude, verse 9.)

greatest painters of the time to work jointly in the production of a majestic whole whose parts were to be logically bound together,—a truly Roman and centralising idea, Catholic in the literal sense of the word, and well worthy of a Mæcenæpontiff,—it has been agreed that the honour of this is due to the nephew of Sixtus, at that time Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere, and its date has been generally fixed at the period (January, 1481) when the Cardinal visited Florence.<sup>1</sup>

When this papal nephew, twenty-three years later, himself became Pope, he at once desired to complete a decoration so brilliantly begun, and the tyrannical pressure that he brought to bear to this end upon the recalcitrant genius of Buonarroti is matter of history. The painter, however, was able at least to obtain the advantage of making his own selection of subjects for the painting of the vault. It was the intention of Julius II. to have the Twelve Apostles; to him the Acts seemed the appropriate complements of the Pentateuch and Gospels, which were already the theme of the frieze; and in the famous *arazzi* for the chapel,<sup>2</sup> Raffaello showed later of what elevation and splendour and richness this theme of the Apostles was capable. But nothing could be more characteristic than that Michelangelo should find the project

<sup>1</sup> Schmarsow, *Melozzo da Forlì*, p. 210.—The vault of the Sistine Chapel, before Michelangelo, was painted blue with stars of gold, as appears from a drawing preserved in the Uffizi (No. 711), which is of the time of Giuliano di Sangallo.

<sup>2</sup> These *arazzi* decorated the Sistine until the sack of Rome in 1527. Ten out of the eleven are now exhibited in a long corridor of the Vatican.

of Julius II. "very poor,"<sup>1</sup> and that, being at last left free to follow his own ideas, he should at once go back to Genesis and the *Liber generationis*!<sup>2</sup> He formed the design of painting upon the ceiling a history of the creation, and placing on the coving the *Prophets* and the *Ancestors of Christ*: a cosmogony and a theogony most stately; a magnificent preface to the life of Moses and the life of Jesus in the cycle beneath; moreover, a truly new interpretation of the Old Testament, the Jewish Scriptures, whose sombre horizons and sublime terrors one may say that it for the first time revealed.

To the predecessors of Michelangelo, in fact, the Bible had been chiefly a charming collection of wonderful stories, a real *novellino*, whose narratives, always so varied, often so naïve and sometimes so profane, gave them a welcome repose after the great gospel epic, with its pathetic and tragic scenes. Follow these narratives, as they are detailed at length, from the fifth century to the fifteenth, in the mosaics of Santa Maria Maggiore, of Monreale, of the *atrio* of S. Mark's, and later, the frescos

<sup>1</sup> "According to the first project, I was to execute the Twelve Apostles in the lunettes, and fill the rest of the space with the usual ornaments. In thinking of this work, it appeared to me, however, and I said this at once to the Pope, that *it would never be more than a very poor thing*." (Michelangelo to Fattucci, *Lettere di Michelangelo*, ed. Milanesi, p. 427.) Wölfflin finds this "first project," in a pen-and-ink drawing, preserved in the British Museum. *Jahrbuch preussischer Kunstsammlungen*, vol. iii., p. 178 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> *Liber generationis Jesu Christi filii David, filii Abraham. Abraham genuit Isaac, Isaac autem genuit Jacob*, etc., etc. (*Evangel. secundum S. Matthæum* i., 1 et seq.

of Cimabue in the upper church at Assisi, of Paolo Uccello in the *chostro verde* of Florence, of Pietro di Puccio and Benozzo Gozzoli in the Campo Santo at Pisa: for the most part these are nothing more than *genre* pictures, scenes of home life, a familiar and anecdotic history of Jewish patriarchs and heroes. The episodes most unedifying in all the Jewish canon are reproduced deliberately, frankly, by these mediæval artists who are not willing to omit anything from a text so interesting, and make it a point to illustrate it chapter by chapter, and verse by verse. They do this with extreme freedom, often with a remarkable raciness and inventive faculty, and thus, unconsciously, *secularise* more and more the Hebrew Scriptures; one would scarcely suspect a pupil of Fra Angelico's in the lively painter of the *Vergognosa*, the *Vintage of Noah*, the *Marriage of Jacob*, and other frescos of the Pisan cemetery. In this direction, also, as in so many others, Perugino's immortal pupil was destined (about 1519) to sum up the labour of the early masters, the efforts of the ages past, and give it harmonious and supreme expression. A series of exquisite idyls drawn from the Old Testament, some fifty coloured vignettes, full of grace, freshness, and elegance,—this, in the *loggie* of the third story of the Vatican, forms the famous decoration which, by common consent, has been called *Raffaello's Bible*.

Quite different is Buonarroti's *Bible* in the palatine chapel. Idyl and *genre* are cast far from it; the *novellino* has given place to a grand religious drama, a great Mystery animated by the breath of Savonarola. This Mystery embraces both heaven and earth, and gives, so to speak,

an abridgment of sacred history in a series of scenes, of visions, from the first day of creation to the Word made Flesh, from Jehovah to Jesus.

The First Day of the world inspired a picture of unexampled daring: for what is bolder than an effort to represent the void, to make visible the darkness upon the face of the waters? "The subject carries us back of creation. The world, as yet, is not; more than that, neither time nor space has begun to be. From the thick darkness, dense and wan like a heavy fog, rises a solitary figure with a sort of sublime terror, as if amazed at the solitude. A head and shoulders, an arm; that is all. God arises out of the chaos; He has ascended from depths of infinitude, traversing the waves of silence; He emerges upon the surface of the darkness; He looks about Him, and makes ready to speak the *Fiat lux!*"<sup>1</sup>

The next scene represents God in all the impetuosity and in all the ubiquity of His creative power: He extends His arms, and the two great lights shine in the firmament; He lowers His hand, and the earth brings forth grass, and the tree yielding fruit. He is at once near, and far away: in the same scene we see Him facing us and turned away from us; at the right, He appears in the plenitude and definiteness of His sovereign presence, while at the left He disappears, extremely foreshortened, in a far-extended whirlwind. The attendant angels themselves fall back, dazzled and dismayed in the presence of this sudden outburst of divine omnipotence. This is indeed Jehovah, as

<sup>1</sup> Émile Montégut, *Philosophie de la Sixtine* (*Revue des Deux Mondes*, 15 Février, 1870).



the Hebrew prophets saw Him and described Him; but this is also the Word, as Goethe's Faust will later strive to interpret Him: "The Word? say rather the Thought, or, better still, the Power; or, best of all, the Act!"

Thought, power, and will,—all this is legible in the splendid figure, the most august representation of the Eternal Father ever reached by art, and to which one is tempted to apply the grand saying of an ancient author concerning the Pheidian Zeus, "whose beauty seems to have added something to received religion, so like to God was the majesty of the work."<sup>1</sup> But in the work of Pheidias, this God was, above all, the ancients tell us, serenity and calm; while in that of Michelangelo He is, above all, *motion* and *action*.

He is *goodness* also, let us not forget; this He is, especially, in the third and last scene, where He looks down upon His completed work and blesses it from above: *benedixitque dicens: Crescite et multiplicamini*. He comes towards us from the depths of the firmament, slowly traversing the spaces, His look bent upon the earth, His hands widespread. It is still the same type of Jehovah with the mighty head, the brow with its deep horizontal furrow, like that of the masque of Otricoli; but the features are relaxed, so to speak, and softened, by the expression of a measureless benevolence, the face is, as it were, lighted up by the generous flame within. The angels, so stirred and agitated in the previous picture,

<sup>1</sup> *Phidiaz Olympius Jupiter, cujus pulchritudo adjecisse aliquid etiam receptæ religioni videtur, adeo majestas operis Deum æquavit* (Quintil., *Inst. Or.*, vol. xii., p. 10).

now float, serene and placid, tranquilly sheltered beneath the mantle of the Lord as under the great sail of a ship. The tranquillisation is complete: not a cloud in the sky, not the slightest shadow upon the horizon; the listening universe seems to hold its breath, that it may the better hear the word of grace and love. A sweet, melodious *andante* is the finale to this symphony of the Creation, whose first two movements are so fiery and so formidable.

And here it is well to notice that the nine pictures of the ceiling—four large and five smaller—constitute three distinct groups, three vast tripartite compositions: the *Creation of the World*, *Paradise*, the *Deluge*. These are trilogies conceived in the form of triptychs,<sup>1</sup> and the alternation of the long and short panels animates as with a musical rhythm the entire series of pictures inspired by the book of Genesis.

A word also concerning the angels who in these paintings attend upon Jehovah, and are again seen surrounding the Prophets and Sibyls. They have no points of resemblance to the superhuman messengers, long-winged and long-robed, of Giotto and of Giovanni da Fiesole; nor have they aught in common with the ærial *bambino*, half Eros, half "celestial butterfly," of Raffaello and Titian. Wingless, undraped, robust of limb, serious and sometimes even severe of expression, these angels of Buonar-

<sup>1</sup> That is to say, of a large central panel with two lesser ones at the sides. In the triptych of *Paradise*, the two side panels are larger than the central one, in conformity with the position of the windows of the chapel. We may further notice that the historic episodes at the four angles of the ceiling (*Goliath*, *Judith*, *Haman*, and the *Brazen Serpent*) have also the character of triptychs.

roti are rather plastic manifestations of Mind, multiplied emanations of transcendent thought. "The ancient Hebrew angelology," says Renan, "was of extreme simplicity; myriads of sons of God, nameless, surround the Lord, the incessant embodiment of His thoughts. Michelangelo, in the Sistine ceiling, marvellously comprehended this,—a sort of divine shell surrounds the Lord and the happy children who, scarcely separated from Him, swarm about Him, identified completely with Himself." <sup>1</sup> Here, again, the disciple of Savonarola knew how to read the Bible as neither predecessor nor contemporary of his has ever done,—could penetrate, by the intuition of his own genius, the ultimate depths of the Jewish genius and its mysterious concepts. But what is the meaning of the female angel in the attendant group, both in the *Creation of the World* and in the *Creation of Adam*? To me she seems the Wisdom of the eighth chapter of Proverbs, a chapter which is recited by the Church at certain festivals of the Virgin Mary<sup>2</sup>: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. . . . When he prepared the heavens, I was there: . . . when he appointed the foundations of the earth then I was by him: as a master workman: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him."

The second trilogy of the ceiling represents the Creator

<sup>1</sup> *Histoire d'Israël*, vol. iv., p. 164.

<sup>2</sup> See *Missale Romanum*, Jan. 23rd, Sept. 8th, and Dec. 8th. It will also be remembered that the Sistine Chapel is dedicated to the Virgin.

calling into life the man whom He has formed from the dust of the earth. *Et inspiravit in faciem in ejus spiraculum vite*, says the Bible; for the mediæval artist, to represent this "breath of life" and its effect was one of the most difficult of problems. In the mosaic of the vestibule of San Marco in Venice, the Creator hangs about the man's neck a little winged Psyche, nude and classic; at Monreale, a luminous ray, coming from the mouth of the Lord, touches the lips of the father of us all. Less ingenious, or more respectful, the Italian masters of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries have no longer this childlike venturesomeness; they limit themselves to a dull, vague means of expression which finally becomes almost a conventional sign. In Giotto's Campanile, in the famous bronze doors of della Quercia and Ghiberti, in Pietro di Puccio's frescos in the Pisan Campo Santo, and in those of Paolo Uccello in the Florentine *chiostro verde*, the Divine Being, leaning gently over the inert form of Adam, is understood to give it life by a sign of benediction, or by a grasp of the hand; in the Pisan cemetery, the Creator grasps both hands, as if about to lift the man and set him upon his feet. Into the midst of this timid and traditional manner of handling this difficult subject, bursts on a sudden Michelangelo's conception of incomparable power and originality. From the height of heaven, a swarm of angels surrounding Him, eager spectators of the great act, Jehovah descends towards the child of earth, as if balanced upon a soft and rhythmic breeze; His outstretched arm magnetically warms and attracts the man's limbs, and His imperious

finger communicates to them the spark of life. Human art knows not, and probably will never know, inspiration more marvellous. The word *electricity* has occurred to the minds of many, at sight of the two fingers which touch, as in establishing a current; it has even been asked whether a sublime artistic illumination may not here have anticipated by centuries the science of a Galvani and a Volta.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps it would be more simple to think, in this presence, of a certain hymn of the Church, a hymn august and ancient above all others, which surely was known to the painter of the Sistine:

Veni, Creator Spiritus,  
*Dextræ Dei tu digitus,*  
Accende lumen sensibus!

But the thing most surprising, most touching, also, in this painting, is the poignant sadness that it communicates to the soul. How grave and anxious the Creator's face; what mysterious pity, what compassion—veiled, but intense—His features express! He knows, alas! the trials, the miseries, which await this clay, called to life by His breath; and the man, as well, has a very bitter presentiment of it all. There is no enthusiasm in this child of earth at the moment of an awakening so wondrous,—no flash in the eyes that have just opened to the world's spectacle; rather, there is anguish in the gesture, dejection in all the limbs; and in the look, grand yet very sad, something like a mute reproach. The body drooping upon the left arm which supports it, the right leg pain-

<sup>1</sup> Montégut, *loc. cit.*











fully bent, Adam here has the same attitude which, later, Buonarroti will give to the weary, heart-breaking *Day* of the Medicean mausoleum; this ancestor of the human race seems to cry out with Job: "Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, . . . whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in?"<sup>1</sup> The sombre, unhappy depths of Michelangelo's genius reveal themselves perhaps nowhere so forcibly as in this immortal page.

Then follows a piquant contrast: it is the woman, it is Eve, who, in this tragedy of our origins, testifies joy in being alive and gives thanks for it to God! She springs from Adam's flesh, delighted and delightful. With her robust breadth of shoulder, her body radiant with freshness and health, and her long hair floating around her, she represents the vigour and beauty of the primitive ages. She is not the beautiful maiden, as has been justly observed, "but the great ancestress, splendidly built for love and for maternity, the first wife, the first mother." Only the more touching for this is her humble posture of gratitude and adoration towards the Divine Creator,—Jehovah, here so human and father-like in aspect! This time the Lord is alone, without the attendant train of angels: He is standing on the level with the sleeping man and the companion just given him while asleep; by His benevolent and placid gesture the Creator seems explaining Eden to this companion. Set between the two grand, pathetic scenes, Adam's Creation and his Fall, this graceful little picture of Eve is almost an idyl, and

<sup>1</sup> Job iii., 20, 23.

gives to the eye a sort of glimpse of the Paradise so quickly lost.

Lost through the woman's fault, the fault of this beautiful but fatal Eve! In the Bible narrative, however,—and also in the paintings of Masolino, Masaccio, and of Raffaello,<sup>1</sup>—the fault is still very simple, so to speak, only a sin of curiosity, of desire: "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, . . . she took of the fruit thereof and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat."<sup>2</sup> Michelangelo, in the Sistine, amplifies the story, goes deeper into the subject and darkens it with an insistence marked, almost cruel, and—one may as well say the truth—*misogynous*. Crouched under the tree of knowledge that the serpent enrolls with a scaly spiral, Eve betrays a fevered excitement. Her form no longer has the virginal splendour of the first day; it is, so to speak, sunburnt by the hot breath of desire; the lips are convulsed, the eyes singularly gleaming. She has just persuaded her husband who, standing behind her, is pulling down a branch of the tree and is about to reach the forbidden fruit; but, meantime, the diabolic reptile himself stealthily holds out the fruit to the woman, and she seizes it eagerly.

We have here, in this arrangement, so unusual (and even unique, so far as I know), of the scene of the First Transgression, an evident intention to aggravate the woman's offence, to show her in secret connivance with evil,

<sup>1</sup> In the Brancacci Chapel, and in the ceiling of the Segnatura.

<sup>2</sup> Genesis iii., 6.

with Satan; and what follows does but add to this impression. This is the terrible expulsion, where Adam still keeps, notwithstanding what has preceded, the noble and proud bearing, as of a Titan overthrown; while his companion, bent and sly, her hand clutching her hair, looking downward and sideways, walks by his side with stumbling step and feline aspect. Far, indeed, are we from Masaccio's Eve, very pathetic in her open grief, her unabashed lamentation; but we are thus, perhaps, nearer the Hebrew conception of the woman, nearer the Preacher's idea, the *Eva* before the *Ave*. "And I find a thing more bitter than death, even the woman whose heart is snares and nets and her hands as bands; whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her; but the sinner shall be taken by her . . . one man among a thousand have I found; but a woman among all those have I not found."<sup>1</sup>

The third and final trilogy differs entirely from the others by the proportion of its figures, their comparative yet striking diminutiveness; and it would be idle to deny that this sudden reduction of scale for a large part of the ceiling is inharmonious as to the general effect. It was precisely here, as we know, that Buonarroti began working; and this consideration has suggested an hypothesis, plausible enough, and, in fact, at the present day generally accepted. The painter, it is said, had not at first taken into account the exigencies of the point of view; not until after the story of Noah was completed did he become aware that the figures, seen from below, were too small, and accordingly he enlarged the dimensions of his

<sup>1</sup> Ecclesiastes vii., 26, 28.

*dramatis personæ* for the *Paradise* and the *Creation*. This hypothesis, however, breaks down on examination, if we take into any due account the profound knowledge which presided at the conception of the Sistine paintings, and the organising mind which determined in advance their skilful distribution and their cadenced symmetry.<sup>1</sup> I believe, rather, that it was the subject which imposed conditions; the scene of the *Deluge* could not possibly be limited to two or three figures, as in the *Paradise* and the *Creation*, and the increased number of persons must necessarily have reduced the scale of size for the entire triptych. The same fact appears in della Quercia's famous bronze doors; here, also, the relief which has the *Deluge* for its subject is distinguished from all the rest by the smaller figures. When we remember the hesitations, the discouragements, the resumptions, which marked the beginnings of Buonarroti's work in the Sistine Chapel, it is not easy to believe that he could have spent long months upon his scaffolding and painted a whole third of the ceiling without satisfying himself as to the effect of his paintings seen from below.

Nevertheless it is very striking and of masterly invention, this fresco of the *Deluge* with its groups so varied, so dramatic! The fountains of the great deep have been broken up and the windows of heaven opened; all flesh wherein is the breath of life is about to be destroyed from

<sup>1</sup>It should be among other things remarked with what care the triptychs of the ceiling are arranged, so that the larger pictures are in each case placed in the axis of the two corresponding windows, receiving their full light. (See also note on page 291.)

## Under the Sistine Vault (1508-1511) 299

under heaven, and everything on the earth to die. Upon heights of land, menaced at once by falling rain and ascending waves, a multitude of beings, mad with terror, have sought a refuge which is but a cruel illusion. On the left, an arid strand, soon to be submerged, is the deceptive raft to which a crowd of wretched beings are desperately rushing. A youth clings panting to the upper trunk of a dead tree, which is already violently shaken by the north wind: a superb couple, locked in a convulsive embrace, seem to regard with envy the favoured climber; and towards this tree an affrighted mother, clasping a tiny babe in her arms while an older child clings around her waist, is also making her way. Another mother has fallen helpless upon the ground, with not even strength to care for the child crying behind her. A vigorous and handsome man strives to reach a place of safety, carrying upon his shoulders his wife who gazes, fascinated with terror, at the pursuing tide, furious, implacable, driving before it a motley crowd loaded with bags and articles of furniture, and tools, and utensils,—poor folk, striving in a cataclysm like this to save their worthless belongings! On the opposite side, at the right, a rock around which the sea is breaking, is the scene of incidents no less tragic. A group of four figures here chiefly attracts attention: An old man with long white beard and a young woman at his side stretch their arms towards a man, struggling courageously against the tide, bearing in his arms a youthful figure; but the boy whom he is saving from the waves is but a dead body, while the indifference, the apathy, of the other persons who have

taken refuge on the same reef and are entirely absorbed in their own misfortunes, adds still more to the sadness of the spectacle. But the episode to be distinguished in the centre, in the middle distance, is most painful of all. There, a boat-load of wretched beings, themselves momentarily in peril of their lives, seem to have no other thought than to beat off with all their strength other human wreckage, which is seeking to cling to the frail skiff; with insane fury they attack the intruders, they strive to strangle them, they overwhelm them with blows, a woman beats them off with a large club; the ferocious selfishness of endangered life, the brutal instinct of self-preservation, blaze out here with evil flashes. The rest is of the same order: everywhere, immense disaster and universal destruction. Only in the background, high up against the black sky, traversed by long flashes of lightning, a tawny, shapeless mass is visible,—the ark, carrying within it the pledge of a new world to be born; but this cradle of restored life seems like a huge mausoleum, so shut up, so mysterious and sombre is the phantom ship, “pitched within and without.” A single point of dazzling white, however, shines from its top like a star,—a dove with outspread wings,—Noah’s messenger,—or would it be the Dove of the Holy Ghost?

In contrast to this great picture, so full of movement and feeling, and as if to throw into relief its pathetic and picturesque character, the two lateral panels of the triptych show us scenes of tranquillity, conceived in a purely sculptural style. In its composition as well as in the arrangement of its details, the *Sacrifice of Noah* recalls

certain *taurobolia*<sup>1</sup> so frequent on Roman sarcophagi; and the laurel wreaths on many heads in the group leave no manner of doubt that the painter had before his eyes some classic model. The last panel has also the effect of a relief, and in this one it is a Bacchic relief: it has, in every respect, the appearance of one of those *genre* scenes where the old sculptors loved so well to introduce some adventure of Silenus; but how mournful and heartrending is the thought in this *Intoxication of Noah*! It is the thought which has already so keenly marked the history of Adam,—the thought of human frailty and of the incurable wretchedness of our race. The intrepid symbolism of the mediæval period has always lent a typical meaning to the impiety of Ham, likening it to the crowning with thorns; Noah, thus dishonoured and ridiculed by his son, was accounted a prefiguration of Christ, despised and rejected of men.<sup>2</sup> Was it in memory of this

<sup>1</sup> Undoubtedly this is Noah's sacrifice, and not Cain's, as some writers erroneously suppose. There are Noah and his wife, his three sons and his three daughters-in-law, the eight souls saved of whom S. Peter speaks in his *Epistles* (I., iii., 20; II., ii., 5; also Genesis vii., 13). On the left are animals, evidently just emerged from the ark: an elephant, a camel, a bull, and a horse. To those who object that the *Sacrifice of Noah* should precede the *Deluge*, we reply that this is a *triptych*, and not a series of three scenes in chronological order: the *Sacrifice* and the *Intoxication of Noah* are the two wings of the main, central picture, the *Deluge*. The same remark applies to the *Punishment of Haman*.

<sup>2</sup> The classic book concerning mediæval religious tradition, the *Speculum Humanæ Salvationis* (of the fourteenth century) says (chapters xxxvii. and xxxviii.):

*Isti etiam Judæi Christum subsanando deriserunt  
Olym per Cham filium Noe figurati fuerunt.*

In the *Biblia pauperum* (Heineken, vol. ii., p. 124), is shown the



symbolism that Buonarroti gave us, as conclusion to the stately recital of our origin, an *Ecce Homo* so humiliating to our pride?

The magnificent trilogies of the *Creation*, *Paradise*, and the *Deluge*, seem to sum up the *Epochs of Nature*, the *pre-historic* age of humanity, before the choice of the people of Israel and the proclamation of the Law. Four scriptural scenes, at the four angles of the ceiling, have reference to this chosen people, and testify to the divine protection accorded to it in diverse circumstances; these are the scenes of the *Brazen Serpent*, the *Defeat of Goliath*, the *Death of Holofernes*, and the *Punishment of Haman*. The triumph of the youthful David and the avenging act of Judith had become, in the second half of the fifteenth century, favourite subjects for many Florentine artists, Donatello, Verocchio, Botticelli, and Buonarroti himself; they were patriotic and republican themes *par excellence*, and the heroic Bethulian widow was regarded especially as the personification of popular liberty. After the expulsion of the Medici, the adherents of Savonarola had placed Donatello's *Judith* at the entrance of the governmental palace of Florence, with the inscription: *Exemplum salutis publicæ cives posuere*; Michelangelo doubtless was not sorry to place the same *example* even in the palace of the Popes.

*Intoxication of Noah* and the *Crowning with Thorns*, side by side, with this legend:

*Nuda verenda videt  
Patris dum Cham male ridet,  
Pro nobis triste  
Probrum, pateris, pie Christe.*

It is less easy to explain the selection of the other two subjects, for which I find no precedents among the old masters; but they gave opportunity for prodigies of anatomical drawing, and this was reason enough for Buonarroti's art. These four pictures, besides, have no other object than to make connecting links between the two principal compositions of the vault (the *Genesis* and the *Prophets*); they are only episodic,—indeed, almost foreign to the general scheme. They contain, however, remarkable portions which deserve our attention for a moment. What a pity that the scene of the *Brazen Serpent* is so badly placed and so ill-lighted! In the whole of the *Last Judgment* I do not know an episode its equal in vigour of drawing and tragic expression. The inspiration of the *Laocoon* is very evident; but here it is a multiplied and varied *Laocoon*, reverberating in echoes ever more and more cruel,—a tangle of human bodies and hideous reptiles that the eye unwinds with admiration and horror. The amount of physical suffering and moral torture, of terror, and of pity which the painter has been able to include in a space so limited is truly incredible. How different, on the contrary, and how noble in feeling, is the *Judith*! Of the heroine we see the back only; she has turned away her head, as if startled by some noise in the room, and this trait of fear, so feminine, takes from her cruel act something of its repulsiveness, restores to this virago that “milk of human kindness” of which the poet speaks. This conception of the subject is entirely new, and of a refinement unusual to Michelangelo; the group of the two women has a grandeur and a simplicity that is

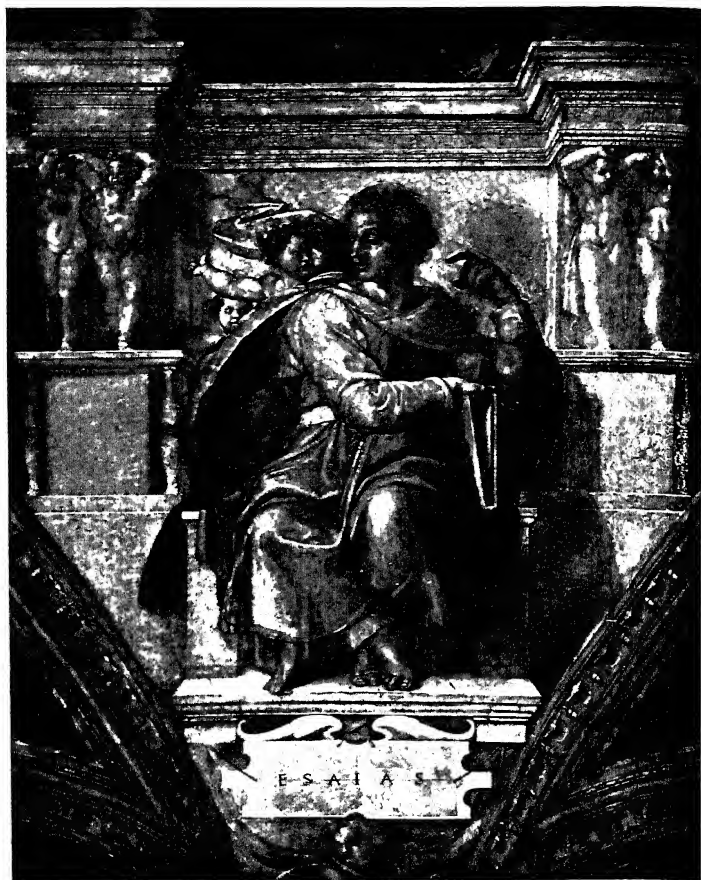
eminently classic; the error is natural and excusable of those who have regarded this work as the reproduction of a supposedly antique intaglio.<sup>1</sup>

Beneath the vast ceiling which displays to our admiration Jehovah's creative power, the pendentives of the vault proclaim the glory of Christ : it is a monumental preface to the *Life of Jesus*, as the triptychs of the *Genesis* are to the life of Moses. The *Prophets* and *Sibyls* symbolise the *prehistoric age* of Christendom, so to speak,—the Messianic epoch of the New Covenant, and to this new order of ideas corresponds a new order of composition. Instead of dramatic pictures, horizontally suspended over our heads, we have now, opposite to us, and well in view, twelve isolated figures, sculptural, gigantic, intensely emotional in expression. Vasari inclines to hold them superior to all the other paintings of the vault: "he who understands their signification," he says, "will perceive that they are divine." Superhuman they certainly are, truly titanic; they seize upon you and subjugate you at the first moment, and they will haunt you while you live. Not merely by the marble niches in which they are set do they remind one of the *Moses* of the San Pietro in Vincoli and of the *Pensieroso* of the Medicean Chapel;

<sup>1</sup> A famous engraved stone in the Museum of the Louvre, representing a vintage scene, shows at the right edge a group exactly similar to that of Judith and her maid in the Sistina (see Mariette, *Traité des pierres gravées*, No. 47). It was long supposed that this stone was an antique, and that it had suggested to Michelangelo this group of two women, but it is now known to be an intaglio of the sixteenth century, the work of Piermaria da Pescia, a friend of Michelangelo, and the idea of the stone is evidently copied from the fresco.









like this *Moses* and this *Pensieroso* they will remain forever fascinating — disturbing, also — perhaps, even, forever enigmatic.

There is, in any case, one infallible way of missing completely the significance of these figures—to speak after the manner of the excellent Vasari: it is to study them with the literary ideas and the philosophic tendencies which in our day are so current. Beware, for example, of seeking in the Old Testament the secret of this or that Prophet whose delineation here surprises, or, I might even say, disconcerts you. You take every chance of adding merely to your perplexities. The *Isaiah* of the Sistine, with his meditative air and far-off gaze, will appear to you then a personage altogether different from the formidable *nabi* with words of fire and voice of thunder whom the Scriptures have made known to you.

On the other hand, this violent gesture, this wild aspect of the choleric old man opposite, will seem to you most unsuited to the Ezekiel of the sacred text, the great consoler of the Babylonian exiles, the gentle seer who, in the depths of slavery, rebuilt in spirit the temple, constructing a heavenly Jerusalem with all the precision of a surveyor and architect, “the Fourier of the prophetic age,” as he has so well been called. By what sign shall we recognise in this *Daniel* of the Sistine, the famous “watchman of Israel,” who first used the great words of futurity, “the Son of Man,” and anticipated the exile of Patmos in Apocalyptic visions? In fact,—and it is for reasons not difficult of comprehension,—there are only the *Jonah* and the *Jeremiah* who can at once and unhesitatingly be



identified. For the rest, we must have recourse to the inscriptions below, which have no convincing authority and seem to have been distributed at random. *Daniel*, *Zechariah*, and *Joel* might really interchange their respective tablets without inconvenience; and *Isaiah* and *Ezekiel* could do it to advantage.

Alone also among the prophetic women, the *Delphic Sibyl* reveals her personality in her very aspect, by her beauty and dignity, by the magic light from Hellas which gives her a kind of spiritual halo. On the contrary, no trait, ethnic or ethic, appears, justifying the other names, the *Persica*, *Libyca*, *Erythræa*, or *Cumæa*. No representation is given of the Tiburtine Sibyl,—an omission truly surprising. She who, upon the Capitol, pointed out in the sky the Virgin Mary bearing in her arms Jesus, the future master of the world,—should not she, before all others, have a place among the legendary prophetesses of the Christ, in the palatine chapel of the Popes? What a mate to the *Delphica* would have been this sibyl of Ara Cœli: a *Romana*, companion to the *Græca*! But, from another point of view, does not this very omission show how small share literature had in Buonarroti's conception of these Prophets and Sibyls?

He regarded neither literature nor philosophy in his work,—whatever to the contrary has been said<sup>1</sup>; in the choice of personages, as in the manner of characteris-

<sup>1</sup> I will not speak of the German metaphysics of Henke, Schefler, and others, I will mention only a French author, a man of extremely fine and cultivated intellect. According to Émile Montégut (*Philosophie de la Sixtine*), *Jonah* here represents faith; *Zechariah*, piety; the *Libyca*, contemplative intuition; *Daniel*, en-

ing them, he consulted only the requirements of his art. Assiduous reader of the Bible though he was, he did not hesitate to invest his poor Hebrew preachers with superb and glittering draperies, instead of presenting them to us as sons of the desert—as “sordid dervishes,” to use Renan’s language—with garment of camel’s hair and a leathern girdle.<sup>1</sup> He cared as little as possible about the names for them; to him the important thing was to oppose the *Zechariah* to the *Jonah* in a striking contrast, to alternate *Joel* and the *Erythraea*, *Ezekiel* and the *Persica*, and so on, in a skilful rhythm of expression and gesture. He never for a moment thought of making us distinguish these Israelitish seers and Gentile prophetesses according to the delicate shades of their genius, according to the tenor and style of their predictions; we can discover in these figures only general and topical differences common to humanity,—differences of sex, age, and temperament; but we discover also that “never has art or nature represented humanity like this,”<sup>2</sup> and that it is indeed a race which walked before the Lord and heard His voice.

In place of Julius II.’s Twelve Apostles, Michelangelo preferred to depict the seven Prophets and five Sibyls which we are now considering: this subject appeared to him less “poor,” that is to say, less conventional, less styled and fashioned by past art. As a matter of fact, mediæval art has at all times treated this particular theme thusiasm; the *Delphica*, poetic frenzy; the *Persica*, jealous zeal; *Joel*, fidelity to truth, and so on. The beloved and regretted Montégut saw all this, “in his mind’s eye,” Hamlet would say.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Kings i., 8; Isaiah xx., 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Mai non t’ appresentò natura ed arte. Purgatorio, xxxi., 49.*

with a carelessness, a freedom, never used towards any other of the canonical personages,—patriarchs, apostles, evangelists, martyrs, and the great saints of the Church. Nothing was definitely fixed in regard to the number, name, or character of the various Prophets and Sibyls whose sculptured or painted semblances were multiplied on the walls or portals of the churches; the art of the period represented them in imaginary attitudes and combinations, in a grotesque accoutrement supposed to be oriental, sometimes with halos but more generally with toques, hoods, and even eccentric turbans; and scarcely had they a constant attribute,—a roll or volume.<sup>1</sup> Thus we again see them in the frescos of the Quattrocento: in the paintings of Fra Angelico, of Melozzo da Forlì, and of Pinturicchio. In presence of subjects so vague, Michelangelo felt even freer than usual to consult only his sovereign imagination and create types entirely new. He did create a series of figures, titanic, Promethean, at once marvels and problems, which humanity will forever admire, without perhaps ever being able fully to interpret them.

Impressive personality has a very great share in this painting, which is unlike all others. The *Delphica* and the *Jeremiah*, those two prodigies of inspiration which strike at first sight and are absolutely unforgettable, seem to have come from the very depths of the painter's nature,

<sup>1</sup> The volume is generally rather an attribute of the Evangelists and the Apostles; but it also is seen in the hands of Sibyls. Compare, among others, Pinturicchio's *Sibyls* in the church of Santa Maria del Popolo.

to personify, indeed, "the two souls in his breast," — the Ideal and the Sadness which is almost Despair! But who will assume to make himself the assured interpreter of the *Libyca* and the *Ezekiel*, of the *Daniel* and the *Erythræa*, of the *Persica* and the *Joel*? who, even, is sure to find them again on the morrow the same that yesterday he saw and believed that he understood? These colossi, hewn as if in rock, have at times the vaporous mobility of clouds; they change contour and aspect as one looks at them. Everything is disquieting, distressing, in this volcanic world, which has an effect of not yet being at rest, of muttering ominously, of threatening further outbreak. These sublime and terrible figures could have been born only in the twilight of the world, in an epoch of which the Bible speaks when "there were giants in the earth"; yet they are as much realities as they are dreams, they belong as much to the kingdom of the living as to the kingdom of shadows. In the vast regions of creative imagination you will find but few who are of their race—the *Moses*, the *Pensieroso*, Shakespeare's *King Lear*, some tragedy of Aischylos,—shall I add, some page of Beethoven? This name of Beethoven comes often to the mind of him who studies Buonarroti's life and work.

From the current conception of past ages, Michelangelo has borrowed here only the well-known attribute of the book or roll, but developing it in an extraordinary manner, and making of this accessory, hitherto simply a mark and emblem, the general theme and active principle of the entire composition. He opens the book wide, he unrolls the *volumen* in the hands of his Prophets

and Sibyls and shows them absorbed in study and meditation. *Daniel* has upon his knees an immense book, and takes notes on a long tablet at his right. *Joel* is attentively occupied with a vast treatise which he holds with both hands, while the *Persica* brings near her eyes, enfeebled by age, some little cabalistic book. *Zechariah* is turning the leaves of a stout codex, searching, it would seem, for an important text: the same is true of the *Erythraea*, the *Libyca*, and the *Cumæa*, each with her formidable volume. Isaiah has ceased reading that he may follow out some idea suggested by the page; while, carried away by his zeal, Ezekiel drops his manuscript to the ground, and harangues an invisible auditor. With her gesture of ecstasy and her sibylline page held out like a triumphant banner, the *Delphica* is the most splendid of contrasts to *Jeremiah* of the opposite rank, the old man, downcast and gloomy, whose soul has just exhaled itself in the Book of Lamentations, lying beside him on a pillar.<sup>1</sup>

No doubt in making so ingenious and varied a use of the book and the roll, Buonarroti had especially taken

<sup>1</sup>On this *volumen* at Jeremiah's side is very legible the word ALEF: the verses in the Book of Lamentations in the Vulgate being numbered, as every one knows, in accordance with the Hebrew alphabet (alef, beth, ghimel, etc.). Certain German critics have changed the *alef* into *alpha*, have supposed an *omega* as its complement, and on this *alpha* and *omega* have built a whole edifice of quite gratuitous hypotheses and conjectures. The same critics have discovered that Michelangelo has delineated himself as Jeremiah. At the moment of painting the head of this septuagenarian, Buonarroti was exactly thirty-five years of age!

into account the imperious demands of his art: he saw in it the means of saving from an otherwise unavoidable monotony the juxtaposition of the twelve figures all representing one and the same subject of prophecy and prediction,—the means, also, of giving to these twelve figures, isolated, sculptural, and in a sense lyric, an ideal and dramatic unity. It is no less true, however, that we have here before us a magnificent picture of the human intellect at its work, a picture of the gestation of thought in its multiple aspects of study and of meditation, of research and of intuition, of ecstasy and of discouragement. Michelangelo here presents to us a *mental phenomenology*, expressed in stirring, plastic language: a grand thought and one which presented itself simultaneously to another immortal genius of this incomparable epoch. How avoid the recollection that, in these same years (1510, 1511) Raffaello, in his manner, treated an almost similar theme in the *School of Athens*?

We may, however, ask ourselves if the introduction of this *motif* of study and intellectual labour has not obscured, in a degree, the fundamental idea of the work, which is, of course, the idea of prophecy, of illumination from on high, of divine inspiration. Inspiration! this is truly the thing least expressed by these figures of prophets. Where is an outgoing towards the mysterious voice that speaks to them—where the exaltation, the rapture, at the breath of the Lord which passes over them? And is it needful for them to read so much, to verify, to note,—these seers, who are “the mouth of the Lord,” and whose lips have been touched by a coal of fire taken from off the

altar of the Lord of Sabaoth? I cannot but feel that there is a character far too bookish, too scholastic, in these *nabis* and Pythias of the ceiling; and not to prophets of the banks of the Jordan and the Chebar are my thoughts led, but to a certain prophet of the banks of the Arno, that Fra Girolamo, who did, in truth, grow pallid in his cell with long study of the Scriptures, who perused many commentaries and examined many texts, before he affirmed publicly that "Old Testament history demonstrates the necessity of an approaching chastisement."

The necessity of an approaching chastisement! It is this, I fear, which Buonarroti's titanic figures proclaim also. In mediæval thought, those Prophets and Sibyls were the messengers of the Word among Jews and Gentiles, long before John the Baptist; and it is as such that they were presented in the Mysteries,<sup>1</sup> and were carved and painted on the walls and portals of churches, the verses spoken or inscribed having reference always to the coming of the Lord. The theme is the same, no doubt, in Michelangelo's work; but how different the expression, and how supremely disturbing to the mind! How grave and severe these *Prophetæ Christi* and these inspired women; how lost in grief is the Jeremiah; how stern and fixed, even, the eyes of the Delphica; how all things here seem to repeat the cry of the Florentine: *Gladius Domini super terram cito et velociter!*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See the very remarkable studies upon the Prophets of Christ in the Mysteries of the Middle Ages, by Marius Sepet (*Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes*, vols. xxviii., xxix., xxxix.).

<sup>2</sup> Ezekiel i., 4, and ii., 9, 10.











Here, with these strange and formidable messengers of the Good News of God, ended the vision of the Sistine ceiling permitted to the Romans in the Assumption week of 1511. It was a vision as by the banks of the river of Chebar: "Out of the north, a great cloud and a fire infolding itself . . . and when I looked, behold an hand was sent unto me; and lo, a roll of a book was therein; and he spread it before me; and it was written within and without; and there was written therein lamentations and mourning and woe." A few days later the chapel was again closed, the scaffolding was replaced, and Buonarroti began painting the *Ancestors of Christ*; figures not mysterious and sombre like the Prophets and Sibyls but serious and infinitely pathetic.

### III

"Could you say that Michelangelo did well to introduce this idea of ceilings covered with vast historic compositions, which torture both the painter and the public?" Thus spoke one day to me, in the Sistina, the disrespectful M. de M., well known in Rome for his sharp sayings; and he went on: "I am quite aware that to this vault we owe Raffaello's *Psyche*, and Guido's and Guercino's *Aurora*, and the gallery of the Farnese palace,—not to speak of the famous domes of Correggio and of Pozzi, and other great achievements which cheat one's eye and wring one's neck. This only proves that here, as well as at so many other points, Buonarroti was the father of the Barocco. There is no use in talking—the first demand that I always

make of every work of art is that it shall not impose any physical discomfort; and I defy any man to *enjoy* these domes and ceilings without getting a crick in his back! At the Rospigliosi, they are civil enough to give us a mirror on a table under the fresco, which saves one from looking up; it is rather odd, but a most humane idea, we must acknowledge. If I had the honour to be *majordomo* to his Holiness, I should do the same here. Many a time, in this chapel, have I quoted to myself Buonarroti's own line:

*I'ho già fatto gozzo in questo stento! . . .*"

It is certainly true that the Sistine ceiling, like every ceiling covered with great historic paintings, has something forced and factitious about it, opposed to the normal conditions and legitimate demands of the human eye. These pictures from Genesis are really made as if to be hung directly before us, within the usual range of vision; it is not without a feeling of vexation that we see them thus misplaced, horizontally suspended at a dizzy height above our heads. The spectator is condemned to a fatiguing and painful posture; he must use his opera-glass constantly, and very often even that does not render him the desired service; and he must lose many hours before he fully comprehends this "drama of a hundred acts"; of a hundred episodes, also,—I refer to the decorative element which has so large a place in Buonarroti's work and complicates it so singularly.

The great originality of the decoration of the Sistine ceiling is that its sole element is the human form. Here

there are none of those geometrical or floral designs, none of those arabesques and grotesques which, in the mural paintings of the old masters, repose the eye at intervals, and give better relief to the principal scenes. Instead of these "customary ornaments," as Michelangelo somewhat scornfully calls them, in a well-known letter to Pattucci, we have continuous rows of reliefs, caryatides, and statues, in bronze, grisaille, or flesh tints. There is first a series of twelve plaques of dark, oxydised bronze, with twenty-four colossal figures in camaieu which follow, like climbing plants, the curves of the tympana of the windows. Then there are forty *putti* in chiaroscuro placed in couples, as caryatides, against each of the pilasters which frame the niches of the Prophets and Sibyls. Higher up and in couples also and facing each other, twenty nude youthful figures—the famous *Ignudi*—hold with their hands great oak-leaf garlands (the oak of the Rovere) with large bronze medallions.<sup>1</sup> Finally, in 1512, after the *Ancestors* were completed, ten other *putti*, these in flesh tints, were to find their place beneath, between the lunettes of the windows, and serve as bearers of tablets with inscriptions.

All these reliefs, caryatides, and statues are executed

<sup>1</sup> These medallions, originally very brilliant, gilded, even, in some parts, have become now almost black, and deplorably mar the effect. Vasari says that their subjects are derived from the two Books of Kings: I recognise principally antique military scenes, evidently inspired by the reliefs on Trajan's Column. There is also a *Sacrifice of Abraham*, a *Chariot of Elijah*, a *Death of Absalom*, *Cain and Abel*; and an *Emperor kneeling before a Pope*, possibly Barbarossa and Alexander III.

with an incomparable skill and mastery, and in the *Ignudi*, notably, the beauty of the human form shines out with a splendour unmatched since Lykippos and Praxiteles. How these magnificent *epheboi* personify life in its full exuberance, youth in its freshness and brilliancy! And still every one bears on his brow the sign of sadness and grief,<sup>1</sup>—Michelangelo's indelible sign-manual. Marvellous as these decorative figures are, it cannot be denied that they encroach considerably upon the historic part of the ceiling. The interest is divided; the attention wanders from the picture to the frame, and cannot fix itself with decisive preference. Is it, indeed, a frame which we have before us? It takes life and motion so strangely, as we advance; the nearer we come to the high altar at the end of the chapel, the more the *putti* and the *Ignudi* above are excited and uncontrolled. It is confusing, baffling, to the mind; we ask ourselves if these beautiful boys, these superb young men, are not something more than a decoration,—whether they have not some share in the action itself of the drama? This is so true, that it is precisely these decorative figures which always are a starting-point for the extravagant interpretations given to the paintings of the vault, by Michelet, Henke, Scheffler, and others. To the fair-minded spectator this multitude of agitated statues, of restless caryatides, seems at last to rush, to whirl.

<sup>1</sup>Two *Ignudi* alone are exceptions to this: one above Daniel, on the right; the other above Isaiah, on the left. The one above Jeremiah on the left is to me the most beautiful of all; he resembles the Adam of the ceiling, has the same melancholy, almost heart-broken expression.

But what are we — to reprove Michelangelo or to ask him a reason for his work? Like Jehovah, *he is what he is*, and he has created his world in the omnipotence of his inscrutable will: it is ours to bow the head, and “lay the hand upon the mouth,” as Job, after having been tempted to contend with the Lord.

“Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? <sup>1</sup> Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? . . . Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? . . . Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the depth? Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death? . . . Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons? . . . Canst thou send lightnings that they may go and say unto thee, Here we are? . . .

“The Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind. . . . Then Job answered the Lord and said: . . . Once have I spoken but I will not answer; yea, twice; but I will proceed no further.”

<sup>1</sup> Job. ~~xxxviii.~~; xl.



## CHAPTER XV

### THE SECOND STANZA (1511-1512)

#### I

BOLSENA, a small town picturesquely situated on the lake of the same name, in the diocese of Orvieto, is signalled by the Roman Church as the scene (in 1263) of a supernatural event which she has celebrated ever since by one of her grandest annual festivals. A German priest of exemplary piety, but troubled with doubts as to transubstantiation, had undertaken in that year a pilgrimage to Rome, hoping there to obtain relief from his mental anxieties.<sup>1</sup> On reaching Bolsena he stopped to say mass in the humble chapel of Santa Cristina, and there at the moment of consecration he suddenly saw blood stream from the sacred wafer and cover the corporale (the linen cloth used in the consecration). Pope Urban IV., who was at that time in Orvieto, had the corporale brought to him, and instituted, in memory of the miracle, the festival of Corpus Domini, for which Saint Thomas Aquinas composed a mass, with the two splendid

<sup>1</sup> *Fuit quidam sacerdos teutonicus, sinceritate præcipuus, morumque honestate præclarus et fidelem Deo, se in omnibus exhibebat nisi quod in fide hujus sacramenti plurimum dubitabat*: so runs the inscription (of the first half of the fourteenth century ?) to be read on a tablet of red marble in the old chapel of Santa Cristina, the scene of the miracle.

## The Second Stanza (1511-1512) 319

hymns *Lauda Sion* and *Pange lingua*. The city of Orvieto kept the relic, and built in its honour the marvellous cathedral, Lorenzo Maitani's immortal work.

Julius II. went one day at vespers (September 7, 1506) to adore this same relic, at the opening of his first "crusade," his campaign of Perugia and Bologna. He was then entering upon his career of recoveries and conquests, and giving to the world the spectacle, never seen till now, of a Successor of the Apostles marching at the head of an army. These vespers at Orvieto were the religious prologue to a vast political and military drama which was to last until the close of the reign; and it can hardly be doubted that the *Mass of Bolsena* in the second Vatican Stanza is connected with some vow made in the Cappella del santo Corporale, at the moment of inaugurating this new era for the papacy.<sup>1</sup>

The other frescos of the second Stanza explain themselves. The *Chastisement of Heliodorus* is evidently aimed against the Baglioni, the Bentivogli, the Estensi,—all the spoilers, in a word, who had laid rapacious hands upon the treasure of the Temple, the Patrimony of S. Peter.

<sup>1</sup> Paris de Grassis, *Diarium*, September 7, 1506: *Vesperis finitis, Papa adoravit corporale sanguine Christi aspersum*, etc. Herr Pastor (*Päpste*, vol. iii., p. 798, note) is the first person to call attention to this passage of the *Journal*. I add further that it was evidently with knowledge of the Pope's vow and to do him a pleasure, that Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici undertook, about this time, the embellishment of the church of Santa Cristina. The ornaments of the façade, as well as those of the interior (the latter, beautiful works of the della Robbia family), all bear the arms of the Medici with a cardinal's hat—which shows them to have been anterior to the pontificate of Leo X.

The *Retreat of Attila and his Huns* embodied in a striking manner the cry *Fuori i barbari!* which Italy had heard in 1510 with surprise and rapture. The *Deliverance of Saint Peter* proclaimed the liberty of the Church in the midst of the audacious procedures of the sovereigns of France and Germany, and their *conciliabulum* at Pisa. Finally, the Biblical scenes of the ceiling made appeal to the divine promises of the First Covenant, the assurances given to Noah, Abraham, Jacob, and Moses.<sup>1</sup> A programme of abounding pride, and absolutely personal to Julius II.! Accordingly, the person of the Rovere must figure in each one of the great frescos of the walls with the exception of the last, where it gave way to the Prince of the Apostles in a graceful deference not without a certain very specious mental reservation. For more than thirty years had not the Cardinal della Rovere been designated by the title of San Pietro in Vincoli?

And it was in September, 1511,<sup>2</sup> that the Ligurian Pope dictated to his favourite painter a programme so haughty—at a time when Bologna and the Marches had just been lost, when the “Barbarians” were almost at the gates of Rome, and the *conciliabulum* of Pisa was summoning before its tribunal the nephew of Sixtus IV.! He was just

<sup>1</sup> Genesis vi., 18; xxii., 16, 17; xxviii., 15; Exodus iii., 12, 14.

<sup>2</sup> I assume that Raffaello must have undertaken the decoration of the second Stanza immediately after the completion of the first, in September, 1511. Otherwise he would not have had the time to finish the ceiling and the two great frescos of the *Mass* and *Heliodorus* before Julius II.'s death. The date 1512, inscribed on one of the windows, does not refer to the beginning of the work; in the Segnatura the two windows bear the date 1511, although we know that Raffaello had been at work there since 1509.

recovering, too, from an illness which had very nearly proved fatal, and his days were already numbered! He lived long enough, however, to behold the Patrimony of Saint Peter completely re-established, the French driven back across the Alps, and the Council of the Lateran recognised by all the Catholic world—events of a vertiginous rapidity, quite outstripping the possibilities of art. Vainly did Raffaello hasten, and employ assistants in his work: at the death of the Rovere he had finished only the ceiling and two of the walls. The painter did not complete his work until 1514; and for the contemptible gratification of Leo X. he even was obliged to substitute in one of the frescos the bloated face of the Medici for the energetic profile of the *pontefice terribile*.<sup>1</sup> But the second Camera will remain, nevertheless, the Stanza of Julius II., summing up with masterly effect the leading thought of his reign.

## II

That which strikes one at first in this room, generally called the Stanza of Heliodorus, is the altogether Michel-angelesque aspect of the ceiling. The God without halo who appears here to Noah, to Jacob, and to Moses, is exactly the Jehovah of the Sistina, with the same grand figure and gesture, and even with the same drapery

<sup>1</sup> A sketch of *Attila's Retreat*, by Raffaello, preserved at Oxford, shows us Julius II. in the *sedia gestatoria* instead of Leo X. on his white horse, as represented in the fresco. As to the drawing in the Louvre, with an *Apocalyptic Scene* (Braun, 264), it certainly is not from Raffaello's hand and cannot refer to Julius II., as the Pope in the drawing has a completely shaven face.

of reddish purple. In the *Benediction of Noah*, there are three wingless genii, nude and athletic, after the model invented by Buonarroti for the pictures from Genesis; in the *Burning Bush* one of the genii of the divine train shelters his eyes with his arm before the flaming presence of the Lord,—again a *motif* borrowed from the art of the great Florentine master, as the angel seen doubly, in profile and in the back, in the *Sacrifice of Abraham*,<sup>1</sup> is derived without a possible doubt, from the reduplication of the Eternal Father in the triptych of the *Creation of the World*. We thus see, taking immediate effect, the immense impression produced upon Raffaello's mind by that first and hurried vision of the Sistine vault in the week of the Assumption, 1511; and it is interesting in the highest degree to study the nature of the homage that he proposed to render at once to the painter of the Sistine in his second Stanza commenced the following month.

With charming and exquisite tact, he had recourse to an original procedure, well planned to remove in advance any suspicion of rivalry or competition. The four Biblical scenes of the ceiling do not assume to be pictures in the grand style, with the customary frame of panels or medallions<sup>2</sup>: they take the modest form of decorative hangings, of tapestries, attached to the soffit by rings

<sup>1</sup> It is altogether a mistake to see here two different angels, as some have done; it is the one Angel of the Lord of the text (Genesis xxii., 11-18).

<sup>2</sup> Compare, among others, the ceilings of Perugino in the Cambio and in the Stanza del' Incendio; Raffaello's own ceiling on the Segnatura, etc.

and nails. Hence the uniform tone of the background, of a very deep blue; hence, also, that profusion of gilding and of silver threads usual in the tapestries of the period; hence, especially, the summary drawing of the figures, and the violent colouring of the stuffs, the clouds, and the sky. The soft and almost blurred finish intentionally approaches as much as possible the textile surface; on the other hand, the conception is monumental, *Yehovite*, and employs the titanic humanity which the painter had for a moment beheld in the Palatine chapel; the *Benediction of Noah*, notably, and the *Burning Bush*, are compositions of the highest rank, which no enlightened admirer of Raffaello could possibly omit in a consideration of his work.

For lack of giving sufficient attention to this character of tapestries so evidently intended by the artist for the paintings of this ceiling, many judicious critics have created for themselves difficulties altogether needless. They have seen a shocking disparity between the imposing conception of these four Biblical subjects and what they have called its "feeble execution," the blame for which they have thrown upon the Urbinate's "assistants." On the other hand, Cavalcaselle, who has not been able to detect the hand of any assistant in these frescos, discovers in them only the deplorable damage of the *intonaco* and of Maratta's very unsuccessful restorations. "Nowhere," he says, "has Raffaello more plainly stamped his own style and genius; in no one of his preceding works do we see such breadth and skill in drawing, united to charm, transparency, and harmony

of colouring as in the portions of this ceiling which have not undergone alteration.”<sup>1</sup> Without at all denying the fact of these alterations, or the even much more disastrous corrosion of the surface, visible especially in the *Sacrifice of Abraham*, I feel, however, compelled to insist upon the essentially *decorative* value of the historic scenes of the ceiling and upon the generous thought which inspired a scheme so original.

It is, indeed, very touching—this page in which Raffaello so humbly declares that he can neither ignore nor equal the formidable art of the Sistine vault! Doubtless the Urbinate will not forever maintain this attitude of self-effacement in the presence of a rival always haughty and scornful: under the sting of Michelangelo’s disdain and of the general infatuation for the *terribilità* of his painting, young Santi will raise his head again; he will attempt even to measure himself against the Titan in the church of the Pace and in the Stanza of the Incendio,—a rash attempt, and one for which many others besides Vasari will

<sup>1</sup> Cavalcaselle, *Raffaello*, vol. ii., pp. 165–169. I will not stop to do more than mention the singular discovery of the “innovators” that the Biblical scenes of this ceiling are the work of Peruzzi. Frizzoni (*Arte italiano del Rinascimento*, 1891, pp. 197 *et seq.*) has already made an end to this conjecture by asking if it would be possible to admit that compositions like the *Benediction of Noah* and the *Burning Bush*, could have been made in 1508 or 1509, that is to say, before the unveiling of the Sistine vault. The “innovators,” moreover, have not paid attention to the fact that we have a famous engraving of the *Benediction of Noah* by Raimondi—who, so far as I know, never engraved Peruzzi’s work. And what can be said of the magnificent cartoon of the *Burning Bush* (in the Museum of Naples), which bears so incontestably the stamp of Raffaello’s hand?

censure him sharply! But how can we fail to admire this first impulse of his, in the Stanza of Heliodorus—an impulse so candid, so generous, perhaps unique in the history of men of genius!

### III

These great masters of the Renaissance took no care for local colour, for chronological or topographical truth, for "the document," as the phrase is now; and in the Vatican fresco consecrated to the *santo Corporale* nothing recalls the chapel of Santa Cristina as we still it see in Bolsena—a poor little place, underground, very small and low-walled, extremely dark and damp, also; interesting, however, on account of its altar surmounted by an old ciborium having red colonnettes with white capitals, and for its great Latin inscription relating at full length the supernatural occurrence in 1263 to the *sacerdos teutonicus*, in presence of numerous witnesses, townsfolk of the classic Vulsinium. In Raffaello's composition, the scene takes place in a magnificent cathedral, during some brilliant *funzione*, in presence of a Pope, and this Pope (understood to be Urban IV.) has the features of Julius II. He is kneeling, and his hands, loaded with rings and joined in prayer, rest upon a *faldistolio*, while his eyes are fixed upon the officiating priest. Behind the pontiff and lower, stand cardinals and prelates; still lower, at the foot of the marble steps that lead to the choir, the Swiss Guard is picturesquely grouped around the *sedia gestatoria*,—five heads of superb realism, evidently portraits.

The presence of the Pope, his attitude, the attitude of



the high clergy present, make the principal charm and the great originality of the picture which, with its chalice, its sacred wafer, its assembly of the faithful in the act of worship, would otherwise be too nearly a replica of the *Disputa*, in the adjacent hall. The unfortunate and very noticeable retouches of Maratta have taken from the face of the youthful celebrant that imprint of confusion and terror which Vasari mentions<sup>1</sup>; but the devout crowd at the foot of the altar has fortunately been preserved to us nearly as it came from Raffaello's hand. It is the hymn *Lauda Sion* rendered into action and composed of human types; surprise, delight, impulses of the soul stirred in its very depths — all this is to be read on these faces of the people, admirable in expression and motion; one might say it is one of those "gifts of tongues," spoken of in the Acts of the Apostles, an electric current irresistibly reaching young and old, men and women, and only subsiding as it approaches the pontifical presence. Grave, self-possessed, imposing beyond all description, the Vicar of Jesus Christ betrays neither surprise nor emotion. His severe and piercing gaze has detected the cruel doubt of the priest, and seems to say to him: "O thou of little faith!" The accompanying prelates are likewise tranquil and serious. It is an expression of the fact that Pope and cardinals are here the official representatives of the Church, of that divine institution which is wonted to miracles, and to which the supernatural is the very element of life:

<sup>1</sup> *Testa infocata di rosso . . . spaventato negli occhi e fuori di sè smarrito.*









## The Second Stanza (1511-1512) 327

*Quod non capis, quod non vides,  
Animosa firmat fides  
Propter rerum ordinem !*

Nothing is more stately and majestic than this figure of Julius II., kneeling alone upon the platform before the bleeding wafer; it dominates the whole picture of the *Mass of Bolsena*, I had almost said it dominates all the other paintings of the second Stanza. There is something of the lion in this head of the Rovere, something of the *Moses* also; this is indeed, the indomitable sovereign who for so many years has resisted kings and emperors, will soon resist the whole Sacred College imploring him upon their knees to yield to Destiny. In a higher order of thought this is also the pontiff full of faith in his mission and in the word spoken to the Apostle: *Tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram*. . . .

Chance sometimes brings about meetings and contrasts of which our philosophy of history does not dream. At the very moment when Raffaello was at work upon his *Mass of Bolsena*, in January, 1512, the Eternal City had for a transient visitor a young German priest who was to make his mark very differently in the annals of the Church from the *sacerdos teutonicus* of the time of Urban IV. Coming to Rome on business of his Order—he was an Augustinian—he had made his temporary home in the monastery of Santa Maria del Popolo, the sanctuary of the Rovere house. He had long cherished the desire to make his general confession in the city of the Apostles, and he could now satisfy this need of his soul. Had he already suffered anxiety on the subject of this dogma or that, the

dogma, for instance, of the Real Presence which so agitated his predecessor of the year 1263? He always said the contrary; he affirmed that no doubts had ever invaded his mind and that it was with the most ardent faith that he visited all the holy places, and made the fatiguing ascent of the Santa Scala. He often stood before the ruins of the *Theatrum* and of the *Thermæ Diocletianæ*, "wondering that the Roman Empire could have risen so high without a knowledge of God." As for the marvels of the Renaissance which surrounded him on every side, the rude German monk cared not for them, did not even suspect their existence. In all his numerous works and pamphlets, in his *Table-Talk* even, no mention is ever made of Bramante, of Michelangelo, or of Raffaello. The son of a peasant, as he was always proud to remember, a true "barbarian" of the North, what could all those *belle cose*, the delight of a Bembo, a Bibbiena, a Sadoletto, say to him? But he gazed upon the frightful ostentation of those Princes of the Church who wore the purple, and he must, from time to time, have met in the streets Cardinal Riario with his train of three hundred horsemen. He saw—one can sometimes see it still at this day—the Italian priests hurrying through their mass, and arriving at the *Ite missa* when he himself was scarcely beyond the Gospel; he heard at table, between the brethren and the court-people, the strangest talk as to the holiest things, horrible stories of the Borgian pontificate; and an immense store of hatred and bitterness was heaped up in his heart against the "New Babylon," where, however, an Erasmus had enjoyed, as nowhere else, the happiness of life.

## The Second Stanza (1511-1512) 329

At the end of a few weeks spent in this Babylon, Brother Martin quitted the monastery of Santa Maria del Popolo as unknown and obscure as when he entered it; but, five years later, the "Theses" of Wittenberg were to make only too well known the formidable name of Luther.<sup>1</sup>

### IV

The distribution of the groups in the fresco of *Heliodorus* defies the ordinary rule of all composition: the action is at the two extremities of the picture, and the centre is vacant, or rather has been vacated. This unusual arrangement makes one perceive at once how sudden and impetuous has been the coming of the celestial messengers, who rush upon the scene to defend the violated sanctuary.

The multitude and the high priest were in distressed expectation: the Scripture says, "While, therefore, they called upon the Almighty Lord to keep the things entrusted to them safe, Heliodorus went on to execute that which had been decreed. But when he was already present there with his guard, over against the treasury, the Lord of spirits and the prince of all power caused a great apparition, so that all who had ventured to come in with him, stricken with dismay at the power of God, fainted and were sore afraid. For there was seen by them a horse with a terrible rider upon him, and adorned with

<sup>1</sup> The date of Luther's visit to Rome (end of 1511 and beginning of 1512) has been well established by Hausrath (*Martin Luther's Romfahrt*, 1894, p. 27).



beautiful trappings, and he rushed fiercely and smote at Heliodorus with his fore feet, and it seemed that he that sat upon the horse had complete harness of gold. And there also appeared unto him two young men, notable in strength and excellent in beauty and splendid in their apparel, who stood by him on either side and scourged him unceasingly, inflicting on him many sore stripes. And Heliodorus fell suddenly to the ground, and was compassed with great darkness . . . for he by the hand of God was cast down, and lay speechless, without hope of life.”<sup>1</sup>

The story of the Jewish historian is faithfully reproduced before us. Among the Syrian guards, some proceed to their work of plunder, and try to draw away the heavy chest of the treasury, while others are already terrified by the miraculous apparition, and Heliodorus himself is thrown to the ground under the hoofs of the fiery horse. The vase filled with gold has escaped from his hands, and his right hand clings convulsively to his spear; his face, notwithstanding his distress, has, however, a certain dignity which contrasts finely with the abject terror of his ruder followers. The celestial horseman, with his golden armour, his glittering helmet surmounted by a griffin, his cloak blown by the wind, and his white horse richly caparisoned and in a gallant posture, is strangely poetic, one might say chivalrous — suggesting some hero of Ariosto or Boiardo. And how describe in words the beauty of the two youths, “notable in strength and excellent in beauty,” closely following the horseman, scarcely

<sup>1</sup> Maccabees, II., iii., 22 *et seq.*

touching the ground, impelled as by a cyclone, and ready to smite!<sup>1</sup>

On the other side, at the left, an admirable group of women look on at the punishment of the invader, and rejoice: how often, with the great masters of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, we find this group, which like the chorus of Greek tragedy, utters the sentiment of the multitude! One might wonder that Raffaello has composed his chorus here exclusively of women and children; but he had in mind a verse of the text: "And the high priest told him that there was in the treasury money laid up for the relief of widows and fatherless children"<sup>2</sup>; attention is called to this by Vasari. In the remote background of the picture we see the apse of the temple, the "Holy of Holies," with the ark of the covenant, the cherubim, the consecrated vessels, the censers, and the seven-branched candlestick. On his knees before the open Thorah, the high priest, with the priests and levites, is still imploring that help from on high which already, in the foreground, is manifesting itself with so terrible a power; and this last trait, this *foreshortening of time*, if I may so say, completes our impression of the overwhelming rapidity of the catastrophe.

*Lodiamo i calci, ch' ebbe Eliodoro!*<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Louvre has a large and splendid drawing of these "two young men," which is believed to be from the hand of Giulio Romano. The drawing has many pin-pricks, and very probably was part of the original cartoon, owned in the time of Vasari by one Francesco Massini di Cesena (Vasari, *Vite*, ed. Milanesi, vol. iv., p. 364).

<sup>2</sup> Maccabees, *l. c.*, 10.

<sup>3</sup> *Purgatorio*, xx., 113.

Raffaello had never before designed a scene so dramatic, so full of action as this picture of the Syrian's punishment. This fresco is the prelude to the marvellous cycle from the Book of Acts—the cartoons of *Elymas*, the *Sacrifice of Lystra*, the *Death of Ananias*, and many others; it preludes in general the great historic painting which was to become so important in Italy, and later in France. Many of the famous works of Sodoma and Andrea del Sarto, of Domenichino and Guido, of Poussin and Lesueur, have for point of departure this page of Raffaello, founded on an incident of the Book of the Maccabees; and it is all the more sad, on this account, to recognise the deplorable condition in which this page has come down to us.

It seems to have been in the second Stanza, and before the fresco of *Heliodorus* that the Germans and Spaniards, in the sack of Rome, particularly disported themselves, at the time of the invasion of the Vatican rooms in 1527: they lighted a fire here—to warm themselves, in the month of May! The heat and the smoke made frightful cracks in the *intonaco* and deep alterations in the colouring; and subsequent restorations and retouches have done the rest in totally ruining the master's work. Scarcely a single figure in the two principal groups remains intact—except the head of the young man in advance, which is still admirable; and the background has a black, opaque look very injurious to the effect of the architecture. One can only now conjecture its original splendour. Raffaello represented the temple of Jerusalem after the ideal which, at the time, fascinated all men's minds—that of the new S. Peter's, then in process of construction: a central edifice









in the form of a Greek cross in its interior and surmounted by an immense dome. We have here the vertical section of the future Basilica in its ensemble, as the *School of Athens* shows us the great nave, with its gigantic arches and its long series of niches adorned with statues. Devastated as is the architecture in the *Punishment of Heliodorus*, it nevertheless presents to us an interest of the highest order; I should be inclined even to say that in the recent praiseworthy attempts that have been made to reconstruct the original plan of S. Peter's, sufficient use has perhaps not been made of the indications offered in this respect by the two frescos I have just mentioned.

Quite at the end of the temple, at the left, appears the Ligurian Pope, in his *sedia gestatoria*.<sup>1</sup> He takes no part in the action, he is but a witness, a spectator; all proportions preserved, he has here the same part that is played by many a donor in religious pictures of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. But he is proud and triumphant, as the Romans must have admired and welcomed him in the early days of December, 1512, at the epoch of the Council and the *Te Deum*.

V

The two frescos which are in sequence with the *Helio-*

<sup>1</sup> The three porters of the *sedia* are evidently portraits. One has in his hand a leaflet bearing the words: *Io, Petro de Foliariis Cremons.* Vasari regards the youngest of the three as Marcantonio Raimondo. The one in advance, with the beard, has until recently passed for Giulio Romano. It is now more generally believed to be Baldassare Peruzzi. See Frizzoni, *Arte ital. del Rinascimento*, p. 196.



*dorus* were not executed till after the death of Julius II., and Leo X. did not lose the opportunity to substitute himself ostentatiously for his predecessor, in *Attila's Retreat*. He caused himself to be represented on his white Turkish horse, the famous horse of Ravenna and of the *possesso*;—he also chose to appear in *pontificalibus*, with his cardinals and equerries, with his cross-bearer, his mace-bearer, his master of ceremonies—and all this the poor artist was obliged to endure, and posterity has pardoned this; no critic or historian of art has complained of it up to this day! To make up for that, however, they have often complained of the lack of unity in the second Stanza as compared with the first,—of the lack of connection among the four great historic scenes of the walls. Try, however, by a mental effort to banish from the picture of Attila the unlucky figure of the Medici with his suite; and, instead, let there be Pope Julius II., borne in his *sedia gestatoria*, as you see him in the Oxford sketch,—as you have seen him already in the fresco of *Heliodorus*; and the *ensemble* of the Camera is reconstructed marvellously, the leading idea of the cycle bursts forth with irresistible power and clearness. The vow of Orvieto then appears as the signal for the “crusade” that the nephew of Sixtus IV. is about to undertake for the grandeur and independence of the Holy See; and this vow is at the same time the appeal to a miracle. Then comes the punishment of the spoilers of the temple; and, lastly, the retreat of the “Barbarians” from the sacred soil of Italy. Julius II. is present in thought—in the original plan present in person—at these miraculous

events of past ages, and he has before him the vision of Saint Peter set free from his chains.

It is not that I seek to assimilate the two Stanze to each other in all respects, especially as regards the emotions they excite in us. The Segnatura has a poetry, a loftiness that nothing equals; we seem to breathe in this presence those sweet and heady perfumes that the ancients attributed to the Enchanted Islands far away. Under the variegated veil of an enchanting allegory we see passing before us humanity in its grandest and sublimest thought and creation, humanism in its most ideal and radiant dream. Quite different is the impression made upon us by the Stanza of Heliodorus. Allegory has there given place to historic allusion, and in place of humanity and humanism we witness the apotheosis of a man and a system. Let us, however, recognise this: Raffaello could scarcely dwell forever in the empyrean of abstraction and symbolism without fatally wasting away and losing himself; historic painting was the irresistible destiny of his genius; development and progress could be secured only at this price: at this price were the immortal cartoons of the Acts.

Progress is revealed here, first of all, by the extraordinary vivacity, the animation of scenes and of persons in this new cycle of frescos. From the lyric or the epic of the Segnatura, the style has become in the highest degree dramatic in the second Stanza. The crowd in an ecstasy before the *santo Corporale* is very much more ardent and excited than the assembly of the faithful gathered around the monstrance in the *Disputa*. The *Punishment of Heliodorus* is a marvel of impetuosity and fire. In the

*Retreat of Attila*, the impetuosity almost becomes turbulence, and the contest, confusion. Men, horses, and weapons clash and smite against each other; the soldiers stumble, the horses rear, maddened with terror; the sudden storm whistles through the trees and the banners. Fire, ravage, all the horrors of invasion are drawn in strong, throbbing outlines. Lastly, in the *Deliverance of Saint Peter*, what a dramatic contrast between the angel's motion, leading out Saint Peter almost with the step of a somnambulist, and the frantic terror of the guards who, from without, hear the sound of the opening door, and rush madly in all directions!

Very great also, and important to note in the new Stanza, is the artist's progress in respect to colouring. It has been justly said: "Raffaello is not a colourist in the sense that we attribute to this word,—and thus understood, no painter of this epoch outside the Venetian school could be described by this title."<sup>1</sup> But it is marvellous to observe how Raffaello seems, as if by chance and only occasionally, to happen upon expressive and harmonious colour, and what persistent and very remarkable inequalities in this regard his work presents. Some early pictures of his, like the *Saint George*, and the *Belle Jardinière* of the Louvre, show us delicate, transparent gradations of tone, a purity and happy arrangement in the strong colours of the costumes, an exquisite freshness in the flesh tints; while others (the small *Holy Family* of the Louvre, for example, and the *Entombment* of the Borghese Gallery) have only harsh, inharmonious, incoherent tones. Mature age and

<sup>1</sup> Émile Michel, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 15 juillet, 1887.

the full expansion of talent make no change as to these singular alternations and inconsistencies; it is but a step from the *Parnassus*, "where the Elysian softness of the aspect enhances the charm of the composition," and we have the *School of Athens*, with its odd medley of crude, thin tints; with prodigies of a brush almost Venetian in the *Portrait of Leo X.* and the *Violin-Player*, we have the *Holy Family* of Francis I., the *Spasimo*, and the *Transfiguration*, those paintings with metallic high lights, of which Sebastiano del Piombo could say (with hatred, doubtless, but not without some reason) that they seemed to be made of polished metal, bright in one place, and black in another.<sup>1</sup>

It cannot be denied, however, that, in this second Stanza of Santi's, we find ourselves in presence of a serious and systematic attempt to search out all the elements of the picturesque, and employ all its resources. Notwithstanding its dilapidated condition, the fresco of *Heliodorus* shows an ingenious combination of lights in the principal nave of the temple receiving the full light of the sky, and the aisles whose darkness is relieved by the gleam of lamps. The enthusiastic words of Vasari, speaking of the chiaroscuro in the *Deliverance of Saint Peter*, are familiar to every one: "As concerns the imitation of night, painting has never produced a diviner work, or one more generally appreciated." And we shall not find this eulogy exaggerated, when we remember that the world was still far, in 1512, from Correggio's *Holy Night*, and that, in this path, Raffaello had no predecessor but

<sup>1</sup> Letter of Sebastiano del Piombo to Michelangelo, July 2, 1518.

Piero della Francesca. But chiefly in the *Mass of Bolsena* is it given us to measure what the artist could attain in plenitude, brilliancy, and strength of colour-effects. All is alike admirable here: the harmony of tints, the gradations of the atmosphere, the luminous manner in which the figures are relieved against the dark curve of the apse and the neutral tone of the marble steps, the delicacy of the touches blending the rich ornaments of the priests and the parti-coloured costume of the Swiss Guard, the red of cardinals' mantles and the white of priests' surplices into one full and harmonious chord; a page of Titian, one might say, but with loftiness and refinement added.

That the consummate colourist of the *Mass of Bolsena* could so often afterwards fall back into the painting so sarcastically commented upon by Sebastian del Piombo<sup>1</sup> would be absolutely incomprehensible did we not know

<sup>1</sup> It is Springer, if I am not mistaken, who was the first to conjecture a direct influence, not to say a collaboration, of Sebastian del Piombo in the Stanza of Heliodorus. The hypothesis has since obtained currency: not only the *Mass of Bolsena*, but even the *Violin-Player*, and the so-called *Fornarina* of the Uffizi Tribune now pass, in Germany, as the joint works of Raffaello and Sebastiano. There is but one objection to make to this singular scaffolding of suppositions, but it is peremptory—Sebastiano, with his many letters against the Urbinate and his pupils, never speaks of such a collaboration in earlier times, and certainly would not have failed to speak of it, and to attribute to himself all his rival's success, after the example of Michelangelo, whose famous saying is well known: "All that Raffaello knew about art he had from me." That, in general, Raffaello, with his bee-like instinct, had an open mind toward the art of a Sebastiano, a Lorenzo Lotto, a Sodoma (a Dürer, even, was not out of his range!), admits no doubt, and in 1511 he was greatly attached to Giovanni da Udine, who came direct from the atelier of Giorgione.











how great was the share of Giulio Romano and the other pupils in Raffaello's work, after a certain date. Here we touch upon the side of Santi's work most open to discussion and most to be regretted: I speak of the unfortunate system of collaboration which began in this year 1512, and in this second Vatican room. Urged by the impatience and the visibly declining health of the Ligurian Pope, desirous to execute as quickly as possible, for the patron, the proud programme made out in September of the preceding year—a programme which the events of each day were so miraculously converting into facts, the painter of the Stanza had recourse to assistants, and more and more gave over to them the actual work, reserving for himself only its careful supervision and, in case of need, its correction. Signor Cavalcaselle detects another's hand in the group of women in the *Mass of Bolsena*; in the *Punishment of Heliodorus* the work of Giulio Romano and Giovanni da Udine is conspicuous, and it constantly extends in the frescos which follow. Under the pontificate of Leo X., not one of the paintings that bore Raffaello's name was the result of his single, personal work.

A charming stucco by Giovanni da Udine, in the splendid Loggia which has "Raffaello's Bible," represents the gentle Santi with his young followers, "the Synagogue," as Sebastian del Piombo ironically called it in writing to Michelangelo. A half-dozen *garzoni* are seen grinding colours, pricking and tracing the cartoons, or painting upon the walls; above, one sees the elegant head of the master of the school: he is seated, and is drawing, holding the framed paper on his knee; quite

below in a kind of *mandorla*, Fame is proclaiming with sound of trumpet, the excellence of the work. It is a fascinating sketch, all filled with the joy of being alive, the ardour of work, and that union of hearts celebrated in terms so sincere by the painter-historian of Arezzo. Who of us, however, does not prefer the Raffaello of the *Disputa* and of the *Mass of Bolsena*, to the Raffaello of the third Stanza and of the Farnesina? The words of Vasari will remain eternally true: "The best-drawn cartoons can never be well executed except by the hand of him who invented them."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Vasari, *Vite*, ed. Sansoni, p. 636.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE EPILOGUE OF THE VAULT ("1512")

#### I

ONE day, coming out of the Vatican Palace, Michelangelo chanced to meet Raffaello, surrounded by a group of his students, crossing the piazza di San Pietro. "With your band, like a bravo!" sneered Buonarroti. "And you, alone, like the hangman!" was young Santi's cruel retort. The scene, as related by Lomazzo, is very striking; I believe it true, whatever has been said to the contrary, and I should even go so far as to date it,—namely, in the last year that Michelangelo spent under the Sistine vault, his *anno terribile*.<sup>1</sup>

He was indeed alone, alone and desolate as that Jeremiah whose grand, tragic type he had just created. With the author of the Lamentations, he could say also: "My eyes do fail with tears; my heart is poured upon the earth, for the destruction of the daughter of my people."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Earlier than this, Raffaello had not the train of students of which Lomazzo speaks, and after 1512, Michelangelo was no longer at work in the Vatican. Lomazzo was a contemporary of Buonarroti, and his story is doubted only by those among our modern writers who persist, in the face of all evidence, in denying that hostility of any kind existed between the two great artists.

<sup>2</sup> Lament., ii., 11.

He was again at work in the chapel, after the short interruption during the month of August, 1511, when, on the 23rd of September, Julius II. suddenly laid an interdict upon Florence, in punishment for her complicity in the schismatic council of Pisa and her sympathies, which were always with the French. The following week the Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici (the future Leo X.) was appointed the Pope's legate at the army of the Holy League, and the mere name, the situation being what it was, was a menace to the very existence of republican government on the banks of the Arno. The game of politics (*il giuoco del mondo*) had reached combinations unforeseen and nearly incredible—a Rovere giving a place of honour to a Medici, the nephew of Sixtus IV. preparing the way for the return of the son of Lorenzo the Magnificent into the city of Savonarola! In that city, where memories of the conspiracy of the Pazzi were still so vivid,—they have remained so up to this day,—it was long before men could bring themselves to believe that an event so monstrous had taken place.

The gonfalonier Soderini, a man who had never had other wish than to preserve neutrality between the Sovereign Pontiff and the Most Christian King, did his utmost to appease the great wrath of the Vatican, and the winter of 1511-1512 passed in alternations of fear and hope, according to the march of events on the stage of the war; according to this march, also, the Pope now raised, now reasserted, his interdict upon the country of Michelangelo. In the spring of 1512, the brilliant successes of Gaston de Foix appeared to remove all danger; the battle of Ra-

## The Epilogue of the Vault (1512) 343

venna might even be regarded as a final deliverance. It was nothing of the kind, however, and the month of January saw the sudden and complete downfall of the French power in the Italian peninsula. As the Holy Alliance, in 1821, had its Congress of Laibach, so the Holy League, in 1512, had its Congress of Mantua, a congress of restoration and legitimacy, which decreed the return of the Sforze to Milan and the Medici to Florence. Of course the Medici asked only to return peacefully to their homes as simple citizens; but no one was deceived by this hypocritical moderation, and the unhappy Republic thought only of armed resistance to the invader, Don Ramon de Cardone, Captain-General of the Holy League. Vain efforts! The sack of Prato (August 29th) quickly demonstrated the superiority of Cardone's veterans over the Tuscan militia, the *ordinanza* that Macchiavelli had hastily organised with no less zeal than self-deception. The Spanish soldiery committed frightful atrocities in the beautiful little city watered by the Bisenzo and rendered famous by so many masterpieces of Donatello and Fra Lippo Lippi; and the evening of that day, Cardinal Giovanni could write to the Pope: "The taking of Prato, though cruel and causing me much displeasure, will have at least this good result, that it will serve as a terrific warning to the others." He was not mistaken; the sack of Prato had sounded the knell of the splendid Florentine Republic.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cardinal Giovanni to the Pope, ap. Sanuto, August 29, 1512. Jacopo Guicciardini writes to his brother, the celebrated historian: *Furono vituperate le donne e taglieggiate, mandando a bordello*.

In a letter addressed by Michelangelo to his family at the beginning of the summer of 1512,<sup>1</sup> occurs this curious passage: "Do not be surprised that I do not write you more frequently. I cannot. *And you, on your part, do not write me too much* during the time that I have still to remain here." He assigns the singular reason that he has no one who will take charge of his letters; but the true reason can easily be guessed.

In general, during this year of anguish, Buonarroti preserves a significant silence in regard to men and things—no mention of the Pope, of the Council of the Lateran, of the battle of Ravenna, etc. Once only he alludes to the interdict, at that moment taken off, and the allusion is slightly ironical: "I learn," he writes, "that you are again blessed (*ribenedetti*), and I am glad to hear it." Twice, also, he speaks of the anxiety (*sospetto*) that is felt in Rome, of "the peril" anticipated for Florence, but making no further explanation and only praying God to turn away the calamity. He speaks much, however, of his ardent desire to bring his work to an end as soon as possible, to leave Rome, and return to his own people; he hopes he may be able to do this in three months, in two months. "I am more exhausted (*stento*) than man ever was; I am ill and suffer greatly; still, I have patience to attain the desired end" (July 24th). . . . "I hasten my

*tutti i munisteri* (Guicciardini, *Opere inedite*, vol. vi., p. 95). The beautiful exterior pulpit of Donatello of the Cathedral of Prato still bears traces of the terrible sack of 1512.

<sup>1</sup> The letter begins: *Io stimo aver finito quà infra due mese*; Milanese's conjectural date is therefore quite impossible. For the quotations that follow, see *Lettere*, pp. 38, 40, 46, 48, 104, 106-8.

## The Epilogue of the Vault (1512) 345

work as much as I can, for it seems to me that I have already been here a thousand years" (August 21st).

The tragedy of Prato breaks through his reserve, and wrings from him a cry of despair; he adjures his family to abandon houses, goods, property, and seek refuge in some safe place, in Siena, for instance. "Do as is done in time of pestilence—flee!" Thirteen days later all is over, and order reigns in Florence; it is Giuliano,<sup>1</sup> the younger brother of Cardinal Giovanni, who represents order there, and the artist writes again (September 14th): "I hear it said that the Medici are again in Florence, and that order has been restored, from which I conclude that all danger from the Spaniards has passed. . . . Therefore remain in peace. Make no friendships or intimacies with any one but the Almighty alone. Speak neither good nor evil of any one, because the end of these things cannot yet be known. Attend only to your own affairs."

These wise counsels the poor artist himself has not followed completely; he has talked inconsiderately: this is known in Florence, and his father warns him. The unhappy son replies as best he can: "With regard to the Medici, I have never spoken against them except in that manner in which they are universally spoken of by all men, with regard to the affairs of Prato, of which, if the stones could speak, they would cry out."

Misery and humiliation! To protect his old father from being harassed by the new government, he is soon obliged to address himself to this Giuliano de' Medici,

<sup>1</sup>The same whose statue Michelangelo, later, made for the Medicean mausoleum.



making appeal to their acquaintance in boyhood. "Dear father," he wrote on this occasion, "by your last letter I learn how affairs are going with you, which before I knew in part. We must have patience, and commend ourselves to God, and try to acknowledge our errors, for which and for no other reason, this adversity has befallen us, and especially for pride and ingratitude. I never have known a people so proud and ungrateful as the Florentines, so that justice overtakes them with good reason." (He thought of Savonarola and of Soderini, so quickly abandoned!) "I will write two lines to Giuliano de' Medici, which will be enclosed in this. Read them, and, if you like, take them to him, and you will see whether they will benefit you. If they do not, think how you can sell our possessions and we will go elsewhere to live. . . . If you are not to share in the honours of the world like other citizens, it is enough to have bread, and to live in the faith of Christ, even as I do here, for I live meanly (*meschinamente*), nor do I care for the life or the honours of this world. I endure great weariness and hopelessness, as it has been with me fifteen years, never an hour's comfort!"

And while the painter of the Sistine Chapel was writing these sad lines, all about him was joy, gayety, and triumph! Festivals, illuminations, sumptuous banquets, and popular rejoicings were endless in Rome; and from the most distant regions of the peninsula—from Milan, Genoa, Modena, Parma, Bologna, Ravenna—came deputations to salute Julius II. as the Liberator of Italy; Raffaello extolled him in the Stanza of Heliodorus, Peruzzi

## The Epilogue of the Vault (1512) 347

resuscitated, to do him honour, in one of the halls of the Capitol, the glories of the Punic War.

Oh! how solitary and unhappy he was—the great Florentine painter, in his Vatican chapel! <sup>1</sup>

### II

The mediæval painters represented with great diversity, but always with splendour, those ancestors of Christ whose long enumeration—from Abraham to Jesse and David, and from David to Joseph and Mary—is given us in the first chapter of the Gospel of S. Matthew, the *Liber generationis*. In the Cathedral of Monreale, the ancestors of the Lord fill twenty-three splendid medallions with gold background, all around the presbytery; in the Venetian Basilica, they form a great genealogical tree, rising from branch to branch till we see, at the summit, the child Jesus held in His mother's arms; elsewhere, upon portals and in painted windows of Gothic churches, they stand majestic with diadems and sceptres, as heads of nations. The Byzantine *Hermeneia* <sup>2</sup> makes a difference, indeed, in

<sup>1</sup> Michelangelo's share in the insurrection of 1529, against the Medici, is well known. Again, in 1544, under the reign of the Grand Duke Cosmo, the artist bade Ruberto Strozzi to say from him to Francis I., that if his Most Christian Majesty would "restore liberty to Florence," he, Buonarroti, would engage to erect to him with his own hands and at his own expense a bronze equestrian statue in the piazza (Gaye, *Carteggio*, vol. ii., p. 296).—"A kingdom for a horse!"

<sup>2</sup> The *Hermeneia* is the famous Guide to sacred painting that was discovered by Monsieur Didron in one of the monasteries of Mount Athos and has been published under the title of *Manual of Christian Iconography* (see pp. 124-129). See also Coblet,

S. Matthew's list, between patriarchs, kings, and those that the manual calls simply "the righteous" (Aminadab, Booz, Matthan, etc.); but the sculptors and makers of religious pictures in Western Europe insisted strongly upon the royal and illustrious origin of the holy pair at Nazareth. The cathedrals of Chartres, Amiens, Rheims, and many others exhibit rows of these personages, all wearing crowns, — and hence wrongly taken for Merovingian kings, — who are the "Kings of the House of Judah," and ancestors of the "Queen of Heaven."

In contradiction to the tradition so widely adopted, the *Genealogy of the Lord* in the Sistine Chapel<sup>1</sup> offers only types of humble life—men of rustic aspect and dress, women wearing the *fazzoletto* of the Campagna, barefooted, and having in their hands scissors, knitting-work, or the spindle. The stately names of David, Solomon, Rehoboam, Hezekiah, Josiah, on the tablets of the windows are there only for mementos<sup>2</sup>; Michelangelo conceived the statement of the *Liber generationis* in a sense altogether symbolic, transcendent. "The poor and humble are the true family of Christ," said Savonarola; and it is a succession of these humble generations that we see represented in the eight tympana, the triangular spaces which are over the lunettes of the windows. In poverty *Étude sur l'arbre de Jesse*, p. 6 et seq.; and upon the sculptures of the cathedrals of Chartres, Amiens, and others. Wilhelm Vöge, *Monumentaler Stil im Mittelalter*, pp. 165-190.

<sup>1</sup> *Genealogia del Salvatore* (Condivi); *Genealogia di Gesu Christo* (Vasari.)

<sup>2</sup> The tablets give no female name, although the woman is always the principal figure in each one of the groups of *Ancestors*, as is the Virgin in every picture of the Holy Family.









## The Epilogue of the Vault (1512) 349

and distress and vain expectation have they awaited the coming of that Messiah whom prophets and sibyls announced so many centuries ago. The suffering has been great and they are very weary: *Quia tempus est miserendi Sion, quia venit tempus.*

A thought not less original and subtle is that each one of these generations is imagined as a *prefiguration* of the Holy Family, a group typically formed of three persons—the woman very young, the man much older, the child a very young *bambino*. Poor, suffering, weary family, where even the child seems to have forgotten how to smile! The expression varies from one group to another, but remains always sad, running through the whole gamut of suffering, from resigned endurance to the extreme of depression and prostration. S. Matthew's list thus unfolds itself before us in a touching picture of the human soul, of the soul of "the righteous," on the eve of the Lord's nativity.

The eye passes, in general, too rapidly over these paintings which are, however, so remarkable for variety of expression, for splendour of type, and for skilful construction of the *ensemble*. What an accent of gloom and sadness in this woman who is relieved, sculptural and as if petrified, against the darkness of the first tympanum near the altar, on the right! How tragic the masque of the widow with the two fatherless children in the picture which bears the name *Rehoboam*: it is like the head of a Medea! How poignant the despair of this other widow, opposite, who, bent double, crushed, as it were, remains insensible to the timid caresses of the two poor little creatures at her side! Less tearful, but more touch-



ing, perhaps, is this workwoman with her great shears, whose slightly Semitic features and bent head remind one of the *Pietà* in S. Peter's. And how charming the baby, quite nude, who watches his mother's work with naïve curiosity! What a charm, in general, the artist has diffused over all these children, sad and unsmiling as they are! Remark especially in those of them who are asleep or tired, how the supple, flexible body follows the curves of the mother's breast to which they cling! This is a *motif* very original, very personal with Michelangelo; you will find it neither in Titian's paintings, nor in Correggio's.<sup>1</sup> As we go farther away from the altar, and farther back in date, the groups of the tympana are more tranquil, more developed, and more stately; the last, on the right nearest the door (between the *Isaiah* and the *Delphica*), is a marvel of pathetic grace and picturesque composition. The admirable *villanella*, all in white, with the child in her arms, is truly the most beautiful female figure that ever came from the hand of Buonarroti; what noble languor in the face, what majesty in the bearing! The superb pose of the husband, too, lying upon the ground, wearied out with the heat and burden of the day! I know no *Holy Family* or *Repose in Egypt* which, in beauty of sentiment and of design is equal to this group, entitled *Josiah*. Andrea del Sarto was visibly inspired by it in his *Madonna del Sacco*.

<sup>1</sup> But you will find it in certain small Holy Families in the Roman galleries (Doria, Corsini, and the former Sciarra Gallery), all works of the pupils of Buonarroti (Venusti and others), as well as in the *Carità* of Andrea del Sarto (in the Louvre). This painter has profited much by the Sistine vault.

## The Epilogue of the Vault (1512) 351

And Michelangelo himself — the Michelangelo of other days and all other work—is scarcely to be recognised here, in this *Liber generationis* of the tympana. The subject is emotional, yet there is no violence in the attitudes, no impetuosity in the gestures; nor is there exuberance in the figures or display of anatomical knowledge, and nudity is the privilege of the children only. A surprising phenomenon, almost unique in Buonarroti's work, are these figures of a poetry so intimate and so intense, these compositions of a simplicity so epic! After the vertigos of the ceiling, the dazzling splendour of the *Ignudi* and the formidable grandeur of *Prophets* and *Sibyls*, the eyes rest delighted, refreshed, tranquillised, on these triangular compositions, where all is harmony and peace and equilibrium.

On the other hand, all is confusion, obscurity, and disorder in the paintings below them, and it is certainly a mistake to regard these as a continuation of the Lord's genealogy. How strange are the interiors and *genre* scenes in most of these lunettes surrounding the windows! You will see a mother preparing to wash her child; a feeble pilgrim, who rises with difficulty and resumes his staff; an old woman busy at her wheel; a tall old man, slender and bent, who is writing something on his knee; a woman attentively looking at herself in a small mirror which she holds in the hollow of her hand; a tall young fellow stretching out his legs before a reading-desk; a young girl at her toilette; and others even more eccentric. This is sheer improvisation, impromptu; we slip into a *commedia dell' arte*, with its rustic figures; observe

that tall, uncouth fellow in the white trousers and white cloak, with his big, staring eyes. Vainly one seeks for the general idea which presided in the composition of episodes so incongruous; involuntarily we think of one of those note-books where an artist jots down with rapid pencil whatever strikes his alert imagination, his eye in quest of forms, and we ask ourselves whether these are not the leaves from such a note-book that we have here before us—leaves torn out by the master's hand and transferred to this space of wall hastily and just as they came.

In haste he was, we know; for he was suffering a very martyrdom; he had madness in his heart and death in his soul; he was hearing the sound of the footsteps of Cardone's soldiers, the cry of the massacred at Prato, the death-rattle of his murdered country.

The storm dreaded for so many months since the interdict pronounced against Florence in September, 1511, had at last broken forth in the spring of the year 1512, while the artist was engaged in painting the lunettes of the vault.<sup>1</sup> What these lunettes were intended to be, in their author's original design, certain compositions on the eastern side, so different from those that follow, give us some faint glimpse. The admirable youth (of the same race with the *Ignudi*) near the arms of Julius II. below the Zachariah! The stately old man with long, floating beard, like the portraits of Titian in extreme age, in the

<sup>1</sup> Michelangelo evidently worked at the tympana during the winter of 1511-12. He had at that time so serious anxiety in regard to Florence that his cartoons were prepared in advance (see his letter to Fattucci, ed. Milanesi, pp. 427-428). He must have begun upon the lunettes about the time of the battle of Ravenna.

## The Epilogue of the Vault (1512) 353

first semicircle on the left of the entrance! The imposing matron with a veil, in the third semicircle, also on the left; and, in the fourth, the graceful woman leaning on her elbow, whose head would do honour to Correggio! If you follow out this examination, you will meet other figures of a style no less masterly. Continued in this style to the end, the lunettes would have formed a decorative hall, so to speak, incomparably fine, a magnificent substructure to the hypæthral temple rising above, with its *Genesis* and its *Prophets* and *Ancestors of Christ*. But the nearer you come towards the altar, the more the painting becomes careless, the study from life ceases, the invention becomes confused, diffuse, and unshapely. The truth of the painter's own words, in his letter to his brother, July 24th, becomes evident: "I am more exhausted than man ever was; I am ill, and suffering greatly."

He was eager to leave Rome and go home to his own people; he wished to finish the *volta* at any price, "caring neither for honour nor for the world," nor even for his art! To fill the yawning void of these semicircles, he took whatever came to hand, whatever crossed his mind, so fevered, so tortured! "I hasten my work as much as possible, for it seems to me as if I had been here a thousand years," he wrote (August 21st). But his diligence and his summary procedures were in vain; when he was at last able to come down from his "bridge" that had become his Calvary, the great iniquity had been consummated some weeks before, and Florence enslaved forever.

It was an abrupt and very disappointing conclusion of five years of superhuman labour! Let us not deceive

ourselves, however; in these lunettes before us there is still something more than the painful and hurried labour of an artist a prey to patriotic anguish; there is also the convulsive laugh, the sardonic sneer of a mind that knows itself superior to a crushing world and will not refuse itself the bitter satisfaction of setting that world at defiance. Do you doubt this? But look at those last strokes of Buonarroti's brush upon the Sistine vault, the *novissima verba* of Savonarola's disciple—those ten children placed as painted caryatides at the feet of the prophets and sibyls and holding up tablets. These ten children are absolutely frightful, and are intentionally made so. They are not only morose, stunted, grimacing, but often hideous in the full meaning of the word; notably a girl (for the delicate and tender sex as well as the other is turned into derision), the little girl who holds the tablet with the name of Jeremiah, is an object truly repulsive. And yet it is the same master who, some months earlier, painted the graceful *bimbi* of the tympana, not to speak of the *putti* in flat tints of earlier days, and the sublime *Ignudi* of the ceiling!

What did contemporaries say to these lunettes? Very probably the same word that Vasari uses, the word *capricci*, which, in the days of Julius II. and Leo X., included and legitimated so many things, from Raffaello's dainty fancies for a drop scene to the insipid buffooneries of the despicable frate Mariano. The Rovere doubtless did not think otherwise; he was, moreover, so delighted to see filled the sad gaps of the preceding year, so happy to be able at last to show his chapel to the guests assembled

for his Council and his entertainments! Before the dazzling splendour, now completely unveiled, of the *testudo*—to use Albertini's word in his *Mirabilia*—what mattered a few *capricci* more or less successful? The only observation that we hear of the Pope's making to the artist, after the removal of the "bridge," referred to the incomplete condition of certain gildings in the ceiling. But Michelangelo had no idea of having the scaffolding reconstructed, so that he might complete them; and, pointing to the *Patriarchs*, the *Prophets*, and the *Righteous Men* of the vault: "Those who are painted there were poor," he said. The Pope was obliged to be contented with this response, this *burla*, as Condivi calls it.<sup>1</sup>

"Dearest Father," Michelangelo wrote about this time to Ludovico Buonarroti in Florence,<sup>2</sup> "I have finished the chapel which I have been painting. The Pope is very well satisfied (*assai ben sodifatto*); but other things do not happen as I wished. I lay the blame on the times, which are not favourable to art. I shall not come for All Saints'. Try to live as well as you can, and do not mix yourself up with anything. No more. Your Michelagnolo, sculptor in Rome."

<sup>1</sup> I suspect, however, that this *burla* is only an amplification of what was said in 1508 in regard to the Apostles. In his old age Michelangelo often became confused and gave different versions of the same fact. As to the remark of Julius II. about the gildings—a remark for which he has been so much blamed in many modern books—it is only too true that Michelangelo had neglected to gild the little balustrades of the thrones of the prophets, from *Daniel* and the *Persica* on, as may be noticed at this day.

<sup>2</sup> A letter undated, but evidently written late in October, 1512. Milanese (p. 23) gives it the conjectural date of 1509!

Do you not admire here the persistence of the artist in signing himself *scultore*, when he had just completed the grandest painting that the world has ever known? And are you not tempted to see in it something like a protest against the five years' violence that has been done him,—something like a declaration that henceforward he will have his liberty? Observe also that after having said so much, all through the summer, of his impatience to return home, he now declares suddenly, curtly, and without explanation, that he will not come for All Saints'! What could he do now, in that outraged, enslaved city, where "one man alone appropriates what was given to all"?<sup>1</sup> He will not leave Rome so suddenly; he takes a studio in the via Macello de' Corvi.

After this letter of the artist, the last of the epoch of the Sistine painting, it is interesting to take up the following passage in the *Diarium*, where the master of ceremonies, Paris de Grassis, speaks from his point of view of the close of the work in the palatine chapel:

"October 31, 1512. To-day being Sunday and the eve of All Saints, the Pope gave a formal dinner to the ambassador of Parma, in his palace, in the lower papal hall; and after the dinner he caused two comedies, with some eclogues, to be recited in the vulgar tongue. After which, when it was time to go to vespers, and the cardinals began to arrive, he went to lie down, and slept, as his custom was, for an hour or two. Then, awaking, he went

<sup>1</sup> *S'un vol s'appropria quel ch' è dato a tutti.* Michelangelo's madrigal upon Florence and the Florentine exiles (*Rime*, ed. Guasti, p. 25).

## The Epilogue of the Vault (1512) 357

to vespers, which were celebrated in the chapel, *more solito*, seventeen cardinals being present. Our chapel was opened to-day for the first time with its paintings finished (*pingi finita*): for three or four years its vault has remained hidden by the scaffolding which entirely covered it."

### III

Family traditions, the teachings of Savonarola, and the humanist tendencies of the age had made the soul of Michelangelo trebly republican; and he never forgave the great Ligurian Pope for the crime against Florence. Thenceforward, he spoke of him only in a tone of bitterness and recrimination, exaggerating immensely the personal griefs of the past, especially those of the year 1506: the Rovere had made him return "with a rope around his neck," had compelled him to cry *misericordia*!<sup>1</sup> In the letters written to Fattucci in 1524, as well as in the souvenirs dictated to Condivi in 1553, there is no gratified recurrence to the glorious epoch of the Sistine painting, no kind word as to the Mæcenas-pontiff who, after all, did him no other violence than that of bringing him to produce the most beautiful and finished of his works. Nor did Buonarroti anywhere express regret for the destruction of the Bologna statue, and he never even made the beginning of that figure of Julius II. which was to crown the famous *Sepoltura*, his haunting anxiety for

<sup>1</sup> . . . *Mi fu forza andare là (to Bologna) con la coreggia al collo a chiedergli perdonanza. . . . Mi bisognò per forza andare domandargli misericordia a Bologna* (Letters to Fattucci, 1524), ed. Milanese, pp. 427-429.



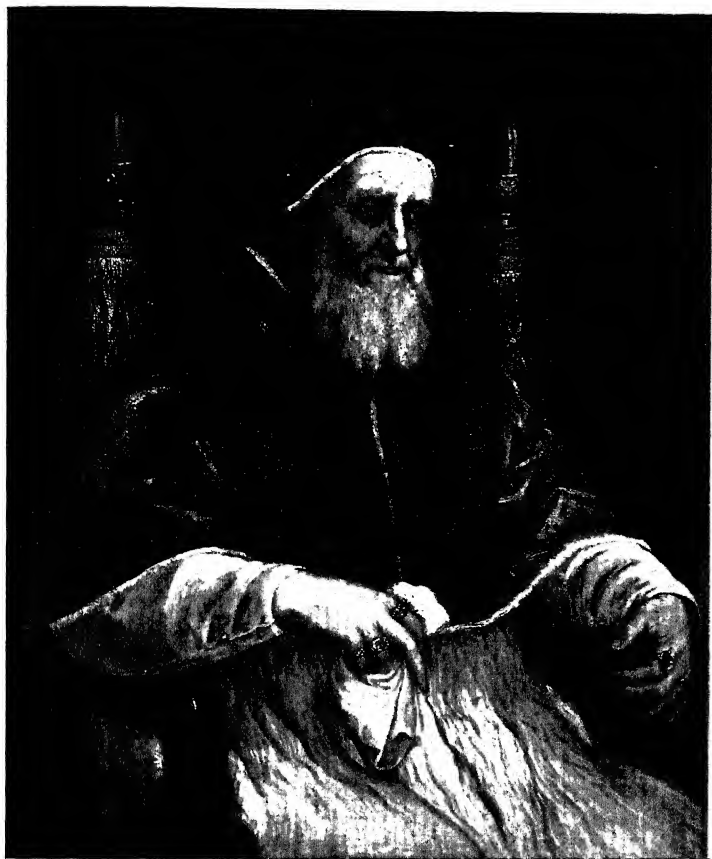
thirty years. When I consider that during these thirty years Michelangelo seized every opportunity to reduce more and more the mausoleum whose original design was so immense, and that he ended by abandoning its insignificant completion to stranger and unskilful hands, I understand to a marvel his famous expression about "the tragedy of the tomb," but I understand it otherwise than do most of his biographers.<sup>1</sup>

His work in the Sistine Chapel being ended, the painter of the Prophets and Sibyls became again the sculptor, and for more than three years was employed in Rome and at the quarries of Carrara, upon the immense task of the Julian monument. To this period belong the two *Bound Captives* (the well-known *Slaves* of the Louvre), pathetic, vengeful figures, Titans writhing in their bonds and questioning Heaven with reproachful gaze. One of these, as we learn from one of Michelangelo's letters, was seen by Signorelli as early as 1513, in the studio of the via Macello de' Corvi; "the said Master Luca," writes the sculptor, "found me at work upon a statue of marble, erect, with hands behind it, and four *braccia* [7 ft. 7 in.] in height." There is reason to believe also that the *Moses* was blocked out at this time, and brought very near completion; but that it was not finished is evident from the fact that in the final contract between the sculptor and the Duke of Urbino in 1542, nearly thirty years later, it is

<sup>1</sup> These biographers generally forget that Michelangelo received a large sum (nearly 10,000 ducats, *Lettere*, p. 564) in advance for the monument, and that the family of Julius II. were perfectly justified in insisting upon the performance of the work.









specified that this statue should be completed by the artist's own hand. To the years immediately succeeding Julius II.'s death, belongs, without doubt, lastly, a group (now in the Bargello in Florence) catalogued by Vasari as among the statues designed for the *Sepoltura*, which is evidently a *Victory* (although wingless) and a *Conquered Province*. "This group cannot be called pleasing," says Symonds,<sup>1</sup> "and its great height renders it almost inconceivable that it was meant to range upon one monument with the *Captives* of the Louvre. . . . A young hero of gigantic height and strength stands firmly poised on one foot, while with his other leg, bent at the knee, he crushes the back of an old man doubled up beneath him. The whole figure expresses irresistible energy and superhuman litheness, combined with massive strength. The head of the victorious youth seems too small for his stature, and the features are almost brutally vacuous, though burning with an insolent and carnal beauty. An ingenious suggestion has been made that the sculptor intended to add bronze wings to this *Victory*, thus completing the classic ideal, and also justifying certain peculiarities which at present render the composition in some degree awkward."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Life of Michelangelo Buonarroti, vol. ii., pp. 89, 90.

<sup>2</sup> For the *Bound Captive*, the *Moses*, and the *Victory*, see illustrations in Chapter II.: The Story of a Tomb.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE LAST CARNIVAL (FEBRUARY, 1513)

NEVER before, according to contemporaries, had the Carnival at Rome been celebrated with so much splendour and *grandezza* as in this year 1513<sup>1</sup>; incomparable, especially, was the immense procession which, on Thursday (February 3rd), came down from the Capitol, traversed the via Florida as far as the Ponte Sant' Angelo, proceeded thence to the via de' Pontefici, and did not reach its last halt, on the piazza Navona, till long after midnight. Two thousand soldiers, foot and horse, led the way; they were in glittering armour and their banners bore the famous inscription in letters of gold: *Senatus Populusque Romanus*.

Behind them came the fourteen *caporioni* of the Eternal City, with a picturesque train of pages, squires, grooms, and trumpeters. The *maestro della justizia* (the public executioner) had his place, too, among the city authorities: he pranced along, sword in hand; at his side his assistant with a little block (*ceppo*) under his arm, "to cut off hands on," and a bunch of rope, like a shoulder-belt,

<sup>1</sup> See the curious *Relation* that was sent to Isabella of Mantua, extracted by Signor Luzio from the Mantuan archives (*Federico Gonzaga, ostaggio*, p. 577 *et seq.*). There is also a poem on this Carnival by a Florentine physician, Giovanni Jacopo Penni, reproduced in Ademollo, *Carnevale di Roma*, Florence, 1856.

## The Last Carnival (February, 1513) 361

*per impicare*. But the culminating point, and the most original part of the *festa* was the long procession of chariots, recalling in allegory the extraordinary events of the year 1512, a true *annus mirabilis*. There was the figure of Italy, first, subjugated by the *Galli*, bound hand and foot by "Barbarians," and then, free, triumphant, and bearing aloft the palms of victory. Bologna, Reggio, Parma, Piacenza, Milan, Genoa, Savona; and many other cities lately delivered were represented, one after another, with their rivers, their mountains, and their products. The Holy League had its special *carro* as well as the Lateran Council, and two pictures, having for their subjects the Brazen Serpent and the Punishment of Korah, made allusion to the sacrilegious and pitifully unsuccessful *conciliabulum* of Pisa. A car, upon which stood the oak-tree of the Rovere, gave honour where honour was due for all these great deeds: *Julio II. Italiae liberatori et schismatis extinctori*; and a temple of the Delphic Apollo, with the sun-god on its summit, armed with his silver bow and shooting forth golden arrows, rendered homage to the Mæcenæ, the promoter of immortal masterpieces of art.

A cavalcade of two hundred young men, all sons of the most illustrious and ancient Roman families, and of whom not one was over sixteen years of age, closed the procession. "They were not masked, but they had inscribed upon the arm or the breast the names of the heroes from whom they claimed descent, the names of the Fabii, Horatii, Curiatii, Camilli, Decii, and Torquati. The mothers of these youths and all their relatives looked out from



windows and balconies, and uttered cries of delight at sight of this magnificent progeny, which seemed to promise the people that their ancient glory, eclipsed for so many centuries, was about to be restored to them."

It was not given to Julius II. to contemplate with his eyes a spectacle which was, so to speak, the apotheosis of his reign. Since the beginning of the year (1513) he had not left his sick-room, and the very day after this great ovation of masks and chariots, he began making arrangements in regard to his approaching funeral.

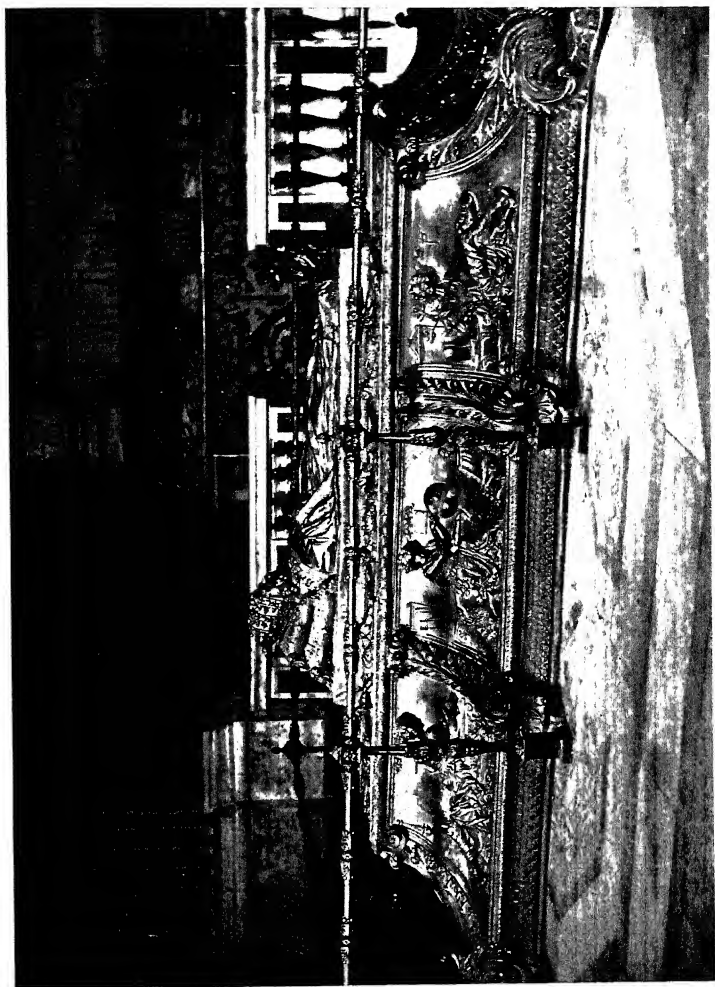
"The Pope, seriously indisposed," writes Paris de Grassis under date of February 4th, "called me to his bedside. He said very piously that no human help would now be of any avail to him, and that he thanked God for granting him a Christian end, not sudden and unprepared for, as had been the case with some of his predecessors. He then desired me to have a care for his body, after his death: not to lavish upon his mortal remains the honours and pomp which he but little deserved, having been in his life a great sinner; on the other hand, he would not have his dead body abandoned without decency or respect, as he had himself witnessed after the death of many pontiffs. He begged me to place in his coffin, upon his hands, two valuable rings that he indicated to me,<sup>1</sup> and to have his remains laid in the chapel of Pope Sixtus IV. (in S. Peter's) until his own sepulchre which he had ordered should be completed (*donec sepulcrum suum, quod jam inchoari mandaverat perficeretur*)."

 It

<sup>1</sup> The same rings, perhaps, that he is seen wearing in the *Mass of Bolsena*.









## The Last Carnival (February, 1513) 363

was evidently during this last illness that Julius II. had reverted to the former project of the tomb in conversation with Michelangelo; but he now wished it much more simple, and destined for it in his will only the sum—still a large one—of ten thousand five hundred ducats. His two executors, Cardinal Lionardo Grosso della Rovere, and the prothonotary Lorenzo Pucci, felt it incumbent on them to have the mausoleum larger than the Pope had wished it, and in the agreement made a few weeks later with Michelangelo, Cardinal Lionardo added, from his own means, six thousand ducats more.<sup>1</sup>

Until the last, the dying pontiff continued to occupy himself incessantly with the affairs of the Church and the State. He received foreign ambassadors at his bedside, he despatched briefs, and arranged with his faithful master of ceremonies all the detail of the sessions of the Council which he could not now attend. The day before his death, February 19th, he signed a singular bull, by which he established and endowed a perpetual school for

<sup>1</sup> Agreement of May 6, 1513 (*Lettere*, ed. Milanese, p. 633). In his letter to Fattucci (*ibidem*, p. 428), Michelangelo says that the papal executors, *volendo accrescere la sepoltura, cioè far maggiore opera che il disegno ch'io avevo fatto prima, si fece un contratto*, etc. In my opinion, the *disegno fatto prima* does not refer at all to the plan of 1505 (as Springer supposes) but to one which the artist had probably presented to the Pope during the latter's last illness. Might not it be exactly that one with which the executors, in a new agreement made three years later, July 8, 1516 (*ibid.*, pp. 644-48), declared themselves satisfied, while at the same time allowing the artist to have this increase of 6000 ducats in his compensation? According to this new contract, the monument has but twenty statues instead of the forty stipulated for in the preceding agreement.

sacred singing, to the end that the service at S. Peter's should be worthily celebrated, and that the personnel of the choir should no longer be recruited by chance and among foreigners, "in France, or in Spain." This is the origin of the Capella Julia which later was made illustrious by the great masters, Palestrina, Anfossi, Guglielmi, Fioravanti, and others, and whose productions even to the present day give so much brilliancy to the religious ceremonies of the Vatican Basilica. Among the numerous auditors who, in Holy Week, crowd beneath the great dome of Michelangelo, very few, assuredly, ever associate the soft harmonies of the Lamentations and the Miserere with the memory of the legendary soldier of Mirandola, whose *last thought*, nevertheless, they were!<sup>1</sup>

On the 20th of February, after having received the viaticum, the Pope called together all the cardinals at the time in Rome, to bid them farewell. He begged them to pray earnestly for him, inasmuch as he had been a very great sinner, and had not governed the Church as he ought. He exhorted them to live in the fear of God and in obedience to the divine commandments; he adjured them to elect his successor in accordance with the prescribed rules, and not admit to the Conclave their schismatic colleagues—those who had given adhesion to the *conciliabulum* of

<sup>1</sup> *Bullarum Vaticanum*, p. 349. It is a common and a very great error to confuse the Capella Julia of S. Peter's with the Capella Sixtina (or rather, Palatina) of the Vatican Palace—a distinct foundation whose functions have been suspended since 1870. See the interesting study upon the *Schola Cantorum* of Rome, that Haberle has published in the *Vierteljahrschrift für Musikwissenschaft*, 1887, pp. 189 *et seq.*

## The Last Carnival (February, 1513) 365

Pisa. Those cardinals he forgave with all his heart in so far as he was concerned personally; but as Pope, he was obliged to maintain with strictness the canonical laws.

All this address he delivered, speaking in Latin, with a strong and authoritative voice, "as though in full consistory." We must recognise the fact that most of the members of the Sacred College had been restive under the reign that was now about to end. The Ligurian parvenu, who for nine years had dragged them from one end of Italy to the other in his army, had transformed them into aides-de-camp, into generals, had forced them to lie in camp as he did under the fire of besieged towns, was scarcely a Pope after the heart of these effeminate, refined Eminences of the South: Leo X. would be very much more to their liking. But when they approached the dying man, one by one, to receive his blessing and to kiss his hand there was not a single one among them all who did not weep and sob aloud. In the spectacle of death there is always something august and purifying which silences our passions and leaves us free to hear the inner voice, the voice of history even. At that solemn moment, the rancorous *porporati* perhaps, said to themselves that there was needed nothing less than this *pontefice terribile* to lift the papacy from the profound abasement in which a Borgia had left it. They also might have said to themselves that, with all his fits of temper and his acts of violence, the second Rovere had never been guilty of an act of cruelty, had never avenged a personal injury, and had sought no other grandeur than that



of the Church. This last point is borne witness to by Macchiavelli.<sup>1</sup>

During the night of February 20-21, Julius II. died.

His remains were deposited, provisionally, in S. Peter's, at the foot of the monument he had caused to be erected in 1493, by the art of Pollajuolo, to Sixtus IV., his uncle.<sup>2</sup> The provisional interment proved to be final: up to this day, at the feet of Sixtus IV. still rest the remains of the *pontefice terribile*, who was the first to raise the twofold, tragic question of the liberty of Italy and the independence of the Holy See. After three centuries and a half, the problem has risen anew in our day, confronting us in all its formidable vastness: and now, it is the "Barbarians," the *Galli* so abhorred in 1512, who have delivered Italy; and *Italia libera* which has destroyed the temporal power founded by Julius II. . . . *Il giuoco del mondo!*

<sup>1</sup>*Fece ogni cosa per accrescere la Chiesa e non alcun privato. Principe*, c. 9.

<sup>2</sup>The original place of this monument in old S. Peter's was in the choir; it is now in the chapel of the Holy Sacrament.

## INDEX

### A

- Abbreviatores*, their number reduced by Paul II., 3; increased by Sixtus IV., 4
- Academy, the, 3, 4
- Acciaiuoli, the, masters of Athens in the Quattrocento, 99
- Adrian I., receives Charlemagne in old S. Peter's, 31; his tomb, 42; inscription in his honour, 43
- Adrian IV., his tomb in the *grotte Vaticane*, 38 *note*
- Adrian VI., his tomb in Santa Maria dell' Anima, 113; a clean-shaven Pope, 234 *note*
- Agnadello, battle of, 219, 224
- Alberti, Leo Battista, quoted: on the Vatican Basilica, 20; on the Cathedral of Florence, 46 *note*; on the dignity of the artist, 134
- Albertini, Canon Francesco, author of the *Mirabilia*, 4, 144; quoted, on Julius II.'s entry into Rome, 48; book dedicated to Julius II., 145; editions of the work, 145 *note*; general outlines of it, 145, 146; other works of his, 146 *note*; mentions Michelangelo and the new S. Peter's, 150; mentions a Library in the Vatican palace, 172-4
- Aldrovandi, Ulisse, author of a book on *Ancient Marbles Discovered in Rome*, 80 *note*
- Alexander VI. (Roderigo Borgia), his pontificate, 9, 87;

- hated by Julius II., 151; his *appartamento* in the Vatican palace, 151, 152 *and note*; his portico, 174 *note*; supposed attempt to poison Cardinal della Rovere, 235
- Alfonso, Duke of Ferrara. (*See Este.*)
- Alidosi, Cardinal of Pavia, favourite of Julius II., 51, 235; mediator between Michelangelo and the Pope, 51, 236; draws up agreement for the Sistine frescos, 61; his assassination, 214, 234; papal legate at Bologna, 234; his correspondence with Michelangelo, 236, 237; his villa, 237, 238; his palace in Rome, 238-40 *and note*; question as to his portrait by Raffaello, 240 *note*; question as to his character, 240-2 *and note*; Julius II.'s grief at his death, 242, and punishment of the assassin, 250
- Altieri, Marcantonio, author of *Li Nuptiali*, 148 *and note*, 149
- Ancestors of Christ (Liber generationis)*, series of frescos in the Sistine by Michelangelo, 313; a familiar theme with mediæval painters, 347, 348; novel treatment here, 348, 349; a woman the principal figure in each group, 348 *note*; each prefigures the Holy Family, 349; poetic figures and simple composition, 349, 351

- Andrea del Castagno, artist of the Quattrocento, 75; employed in decorating the "Upper Rooms" before Raffaello, 152
- Andrea del Sarto, influenced by Michelangelo, 51, 350; and by Raffaello, 332; his *Carità*, 350 *note*
- Anicæus*, the, antique marble, 96, 139 *and note*, 146
- Anticaglie*, 79
- Apollo*, the, antique marble, appreciation of, 82, 83; discovered in the reign of Innocent VIII., 82 *note*; its influence upon Michelangelo, 82, 84, 90, 91; not a work of the best period, 98; placed in the Belvedere, 138, 247 *and note*; mentioned in the *Mirabilia*, 145
- Appartamento Borgia*, decorated for Alexander VI. by Pinturicchio, 151; detested and abandoned by Julius II., 151, 152, but still in use for state dinners, 152 *note*
- Aquinas, S. Thomas, 318
- Arena Chapel in Padua, frescos of, 209, 210
- Ariosto quoted, 257 *and note*, 261 *note*; in the service of Alfonso d'Este, 263, 264 *and note*
- Arrotino*, the, antique marble, 80 *note*
- Artists, Italian, of the Renaissance, their position half-artisan, 70, 71; their relation to their patrons, 72
- Atrium*, 32 *and note*
- Aurora*, Guido's, in the Rospigliosi palace, 313, 314

## B

- Bacchus*, Michelangelo's, 87 *and note*, 92
- Baglioni, Astorre, his wedding, 162

- Baglioni, Atalanta, orders the *Entombment*, 161
- Baglioni, Giampolo, surrenders Perugia to the Pope, 47
- Baglioni, Griffonetto, his crime and murder, 160, 161
- Bartolommeo, Fra, 187
- Basilica, the ancient Roman court-house, adapted to Christian use, 40, 41
- Basso, Cardinal, nephew of Sixtus IV., his tomb in Santa Maria del Popolo, 111, 112
- Bayard, Chevalier, French general in Italy, 229, 257
- Bazzi. (*See* Sodoma.)
- Becca, Michel del, painter employed in the "Upper Rooms" before Raffaello, 153
- Beckerath Collection, 13 *note*, 17 *note*
- Belle Jardinière*, Raffaello's, 330, 336
- Bellini, Gentile, 51
- "Belvedere" of the Vatican, begun by Nicholas V. and rebuilt by Innocent VIII., 135; united with the main buildings of the palace by Julius II., 135-7; winding staircase of, 137, 138; *Viridarium* of, 138-40; its collection of statues, 138, 139 *and note*
- Bembo, supposed adviser of Raffaello, 180; author of the *Asolani*, 207; on Alidosi's murder, 241, 242 *note*; great lover of art, 328
- Benediction of Noah*, fresco of the ceiling of the Stanza di Eliodoro, shows the influence of Michelangelo, 322, 324 *note*; composition of the highest rank, 323; engraved by Marcantonio Raimondi, 324 *note*
- Benedictions, Loggia of the, 31
- Bentivoglio, Giovanni, abandons Bologna to the Pope, 47; recovers the city, 234; is again expelled, 260

- Benvenuto della Volpaia, his letter to Michelangelo, 138 *note*
- Bernardino di Betto. (*See* Pinturicchio.)
- Bernini, quoted, 66 *note*
- Bertoldo, Florentine sculptor, early master of Michelangelo, 52, 109
- Bibbiena, Cardinal, painted by Raffaello, 66; the painter's supposed adviser, 180; instructor of Federico Gonzaga, 251; distinguished lover of art, 328
- Biblia pauperum*, quoted, 101 *note*
- Boëtius on Music, 198
- Bologna, Julius II.'s triumphal entry into, 47; revolts against him, 56, 234; papal headquarters, 225; threatened by French army, 228; a second triumphal entry by the Pope, 232; taken by the French, 234; recovered by the Pope, 260
- Bolsena, Italian city, 318; miracle of, 318 *and note*, 319 *and note*
- Bonfigli, painter employed in decoration of the "Upper Rooms" before Raffaello, 152
- Boniface VIII., his tomb in the *grotte Vaticane*, 38 *note*
- Borgia, Cesare, hostility between him and Cardinal della Rovere, 9; Macchiavelli's high opinion of him, 10, 11
- Borgia, Lucrezia, wife of Alfonso d'Este, 222; highly praised by Bayard, 223
- Borgia, Roderigo. (*See* Alexander VI.)
- Bottega*, 70
- Botticelli, Sandro, his faults of composition, 167; his work in the Sistine, 284; his *Judith*, 302
- Bound Captives*, Michelangelo's, 14, 15, 358
- Bourbon, Constable, ravages of his soldiers in the Vatican Stanze, 215
- Bramante, il (Donato da Urbino), proposes the rebuilding of S. Peter's, 18, 19; a great destroyer, 24, 25; sarcastic pamphlet in regard to him, 25, 26, 119, 120; excites Michelangelo's ill-will, 53, 117, 118; gives friendly aid to Sansovino, 59, 113; student of classic ruins in Rome, 99; his work in Santa Maria del Popolo, 108; his likeness in the *Disputa*, 117, 189, 212; his plan for S. Peter's praised by Michelangelo, 118 *note*; his character, 119-21 *and note*; his work in Northern Italy, 121, 122; goes to live in Rome, 122-4; his second manner, 123-5; his *Tempietto*, 125 *and note*, 126, 127 *and note*; portico of the Pace, 127-9; employed by Cardinal Caraffa, 128, 129; his plan for S. Peter's, 131; plans for S. Biagio and the Belvedere, 132; his energy in work, 133; his constructions in the Vatican, 134-8 *and note*; imagined visit to the Belvedere with Julius II., 140, 141; has charge of the decoration of the Stanze, 152; his hospitality, 153 *and note*; friendliness towards Raffaello, 158; his unsuccessful scaffolding in the Sistine, 270; his criticism of Michelangelo, 277 *note*
- Branacci chapel, Florence, scene of quarrel between Michelangelo and Torrigiano, 67; frescos of Masaccio in, 67, 296 *note*
- Brazen Serpent*, fresco of the Sistine, 303
- Brunelleschi, Filippo, 46 *note*
- Bunsen, quoted, 21 *note*
- Burckhardt, quoted, 125

*Burning Bush*, fresco of the ceiling of the Stanza di Elio-doro, 322; fine composition, 323; its cartoon in Naples, 324 *note*

## C

Cambio, town-hall of Perugia, decorated by Perugino, 177-9, 186

Cambrai, League of. (*See* League.)

Cancellaria, palace of the, built by Cardinal Raffaello Riario, 8; confiscated by Leo X., 8 *note*; not the work of Bramante, 122 *note*

Cancelli, 34, 35

Canossa, Count Alessandro da, 64

*Cantharus*, 32 *and note*

Capella Julia, founded by Julius II., 363; distinguished from the Capella Sistina, or Palatina, 364 *note*

Capitol, mediæval description of, 142, 143; rallying-point of malcontent princes, 248-50

Caraffa, Cardinal, 128 *and note*; patron of Bramante, 129

*Cardinal Virtues*, the, fresco of the Segnatura, shows classic influence, 209; difficulty in representing abstractions happily surmounted in it, 201, 210; fine individuality of the figures and artistic distinction, 210, 211; their appropriateness in the Segnatura, 212

Cardone, Spanish general in Italy, 343

*Carità* of Andrea del Sarto, 350 *note*

Carnival of 1513, its procession in honour of Julius II., 360-2

Carrara, marble quarries of, scene of Michelangelo's labours, 17, 358

*Carteggio inedito*, Gaye's, 347 *note*

Castiglione, Count Baldassare, author of the *Cortegiano*, supposed adviser of Raffaello, 180; his literary work, 207; carries congratulations to the Pope, 231, 232

*Cathedra Petri*, 36

Cellini, Benvenuto, 66, 67

Cerretani, quoted, 282

Charles VIII., King of France, in Italy, 9, 87; orders description of Rome drawn up and sent to Paris, 142-4

*Chastisement of Heliodorus*, fresco of the second Stanza, aimed at Italian princes, plunderers of papal territory, 319; its peculiar composition, 329; highly dramatic character, 329-32; damaged during the sack of Rome, 332; represents the new S. Peter's as the temple of Jerusalem, 332, 333; contains fine portrait of Julius II., 333; a marvel of impetuosity and fire, 335; work of pupils conspicuous in it, 339

Chaumont, French general in Italy, 228

Chigi, Agostino, a distinguished amateur, 157 *note*; his *palazzotto* (the Farnesina), 246; incident of his loan to the Pope, 246, 247

Churches, Roman:

S. Agnese *fuori*, embellished by Julius II., 130

S. Agostino, marble group by Sansovino, 113

S. Andrea della Valle, tomb of Paul II., 38 *note*; tomb of Pius II., 38 *note*, 39, 110

SS. Apostoli, embellished by Julius II., 130

S. Clemente, type of ancient basilica, 32 *note*

S. Giovanni in Laterano, scene of the *possesto*, 257 *and note*;

Churches—*Continued*

- scene of Council called by Julius II., 243, 265-8, 363
- S. Marcello, tomb of Cardinal Michieli, 113
- S. Maria dell'Anima, tomb of Adrian VI., 113
- S. Maria in Ara Coeli, tomb of Honorius, 38 *note*; small monument by Sansovino, 112
- S. Maria sopra Minerva, tombs of Leo X. and Clement VII., 114
- S. Maria della Pace, portico by Bramante, 127, 128; the *Sibyls* by Raffaello, 211, 324
- S. Maria del Popolo, favourite sanctuary of Sixtus IV. and Julius II., 104; rebuilt by Sixtus, 105; architectural interest of, 105, 106; its fine early tombs, 106; two remarkable monuments by Sansovino, 106-12, which fix a date in the history of Roman tombs and have lasting influence, 113, 114
- S. Paolo *fuori*, superb effect of its columns, 30, 31
- S. Pietro in Montorio, Bramante's *Tempietto*, 125-7
- S. Pietro in Vaticano, ancient Basilica not large enough to receive the monument of Julius II., 18; proposition to tear it down and build a grander one, 18, 19; the proposition ill received, 19, 20; the building of Constantine and Pope Sylvester, 19, 30; question as to its instability, 20-2; work of destruction carried on piecemeal, 21-5; cornerstone of new Basilica laid by Julius II., 26, 27; description of the old edifice, 29-45; view of it in fresco of the Vatican Library, 45, 46; view of the new Basilica in Vatican frescos, 46, 189, 190, 205, 332, 333; Bramante's plan for it, 132; its building carried on rapidly, 133 *and note*, 134
- S. Pietro in Vincoli, titular church of Julius II. as cardinal, his monument in it, 114; embellished by him, 130
- Ciarla, Simone, uncle of Raffaello, 156 *note*
- Clement VII. (Giulio de' Medici), his portrait by Raffaello, 65, 213; his tomb in Santa Maria sopra Minerva, 114; frescos in the Sala di Costantino are of his time, 175; let his beard grow in sign of mourning after sack of Rome, 234 *note*
- Cleopatra*, antique marble, 247 *note*, 248
- Colonna princes, conspire against Julius II., 248; give assistance to the Duke of Ferrara in escaping from Rome, 263
- Colonna, Pompeo, bishop of Rieti, leads revolt against Julius II., 248, 249 *and note*; his punishment long delayed, 253 *note*
- Colonna, Vittoria, friend of Michelangelo, 52, 68
- Commynes, his opinion of Italians, 260
- Conciliabulum*, the, 214, 242-4, 364
- Conclaves of 1492 and 1503, 9
- Condivi, quoted, 17, 18, 22, 23, 61, 279 *note*, 355
- Confessio*, the, 33-5
- Conti, Sigismondo de', on stability of old S. Peter's, 20, 21; orders *Madonna di Foligno*, 180
- Contucci. (*See* Sansovino)
- Convento dei Penitenzieri, occupied by Bramante, a centre

Convento dei Penitenzieri —  
*Continued*

of hospitality for Florentine artists in Rome, 153; built by Cardinal Domenico della Rovere, its beautiful decorations, 239

Corpus Domini, festival of, instituted by Urban IV., 318

Correggio, Antonio Allegri, 337

Cosimo Tura, 72

Cosmati, art of, the, 38, 39

Costabilo, Modenese envoy, quoted, 133 *note*

*Cupid*, Michelangelo's, executed for Jacopo Gallo, 86, 87 *and note*, 92

## D

Dante, on the *pigna* of the Vatican, 32, 33; on *Veronica nostra*, 37; his likeness in the *Disputa*, 193; quoted, 193 *and note*

*Decretals*, the, fresco of the Segnatura, modelled on Melozzo's *Sixtus IV.*, 212; figures all portraits, 213; portrait of Julius II., 213, 214; intended portrait of Federico Gonzaga, 252 *and note*

*Deliverance of S. Peter*, fresco of the second Stanza, its dramatic character, 336; fine chiaroscuro, 337

*Deposizione*, altar-piece painted by Raffaello, for Atalanta Baglioni, originally in the church of San Francesco in Perugia, now in the Borghese Gallery, an early work, 160, 161; definition of the word, 160 *note*; numerous studies for the work, 161, 162; merits and defects of the picture, 163, 164

Diocletian, Baths of, 328

*Disputa del Sacramento*, fresco of the Segnatura, its marvellous unity, 165, 166, 185, 191; an idea of the Trecento, ex-

pressed by the Renaissance, 183-8; the religious fresco of the Stanza, 187; beautiful novelties introduced by Raffaello, 188, 189; representation of new S. Peter's in the painting, 189, 190; the affirmation of a mystic dogma, 191-4

Dolce, Lodovico, quoted, 215 *note*

Dolci, Giovannino di, architect of the Sistina, 284

Domenichi, Lodovico, anecdote from his *Facetiae*, 245

Domenichino, influenced by Raffaello, 332

Donatello, 75; his influence upon Michelangelo, 81; his *David*, 91, 92; his influence upon Sansovino, his knowledge of classic art, 112; his *Judith*, 302; his pulpit at Prato, 344 *note*

*Donation of Constantine*, fresco of the Sala di Costantino, 35

Dürer, Albrecht, his influence upon Raffaello, 338 *note*

## E

Eliodoro, Stanza di (the second Stanza), its frescos designed to be expressly personal to Julius II., 319-21, 334, 335; date of the work, 320 *note*; incomplete at the death of Julius II., Leo X. required Raffaello to substitute his likeness for that of his predecessor in *Retreat of Attila*, 321 *and note*; Michelangel-esque aspect of the ceiling, 321-5; frescos of the ceiling have been wrongly ascribed to Peruzzi, 324 *note*; injury done here during the sack of Rome, 332; this Stanza contrasted with the Segnatura, 335; its dramatic character, 335, 336; great progress as to colouring and picturesqueness, 336-8; not altogether Raffaello's own work, 339

*Enfants sans souci*, company of French actors in Louis XII.'s reign, 255, 256

Erasmus, in Rome, 48, 134, 268, 328; friend of Cardinal Ali-dosi, 240 *note*

Este, Alfonso d', Duke of Ferrara, his "Giulia," made from the Pope's statue at Bologna, 57 *note*; noted patron of art, 72; member of the League of Cambrai, 218; ally of France, 222; husband of Lucrezia Borgia, 222, 223; excommunicated by Julius II., 223; prepares an ambush for the Pope, 229; recovers lost territory, 235; at the battle of Ravenna, 256; seeks absolution at Rome, 260; favourably received by the Pope, 261, 262 *and note*; alarmed, escapes from Rome in disguise, 263, 264; imprisons two of his brothers, 263 *note*; sends Ariosto to Rome, 264; loses territory, 265

Este, Ferrante d', illegitimate brother of Alfonso, 263 *note*

Este, Ippolito d', Cardinal, cruelty to his brother Ferrante, 263 *note*; employs Ariosto to negotiate at Rome, 264; his letter mentioning Ariosto, 264 *note*

Este, Isabella d', wife of Francesco Gonzaga, Marquis of Mantua, and mother of Federico, distinguished patroness of art, 72, 248; letter to her from the general of the Carmelites, 188 *note*; obtains liberation of her husband by giving her son as hostage to Julius II., 250, 251; letter to her from the bishop of Tricarico, 253 *note*; letters to her from Grossino, 246-248, 251, 252 *and note*, 262 *note*

*Eve*, Michelangelo's, 296; Masaccio's, 297

## F

Farnesina, the, built by Agostino Chigi, 112, 246; frescos by Raffaello in, 313

Fattucci, Michelangelo's letters to, 53, 60, 61, 274 *note*, 287 *note*, 357

Ferdinand the Catholic, King of Spain, member of the League of Cambrai, 218, 221

Filarete, sculptor of the bronze doors of S. Peter's, 44

Fleuranges quoted, on statue at Bologna, 56, 57 *and note*

Florence, under the Medici, 2, 7; placed under an interdict, 342; downfall of the Republic, 343, 353, 357; interdict removed, 344

Foscari, Venetian envoy, 262

Fra Angelico, 71, 76; in what respect superior to Raffaello, 159; his portrait in the *Disputa*, 193

Francia, 67, 72

Franciabigio, 51

Francis I., King of France, Michelangelo offers statue to, 347 *note*

Fredis, Felice di, 94, 95

## G

Gabbioneta, 249 *note*

Gallo, Jacopo, orders statues from Michelangelo, 86, 87; makes contract as his representative, 88

Gaston de Foix, French general in Italy, 256, 342

Gattico, Antonio, his letter to the Marquis of Mantua, 230 *note*

Genoa, 260

Ghiberti, Lorenzo, early Tuscan sculptor, 81; his bronze doors, 293

Ghirlandaio, il (Domenico), his faults of composition, 167; his splendid technique, 185; char-



Ghirlandaio—*Continued*  
 acter of his painting, 188; his work in the Sistine Chapel, 284  
 Giotto, his *Navicella* and ciborium in S. Peter's, 44; Michelangelo's resemblance to him, 76; in what respect Raffaello's superior, 158; his *Deposizione*, 162; his influence upon Raffaello, 183; his Campanile, 184, 196, 204, 293; his symbolic painting, 185; Raffaello borrows from him, 202; his *Herod's Banquet*, 205; his *Christian Virtues*, 209, 210  
 Giovanni da Udine, pupil of Giorgione, favourite of Raffaello, 338 *note*; his share in Raffaello's work, 339; his stucco in the Loggie, 339, 340  
 Giovanni da Verona, famous artist in *intarsio*, 178; his marquetry in the Segnatura, 215  
 Giovanni de' Medici, Cardinal. (See Leo X.)  
 Giovio, Paolo, quoted, 241, 242 *note*  
 Giuliano della Rovere, Cardinal. (See Julius II.)  
 Giulio Romano, his collaboration with Raffaello, 231 *note*, 339; supposed likeness in the *Punishment of Heliodorus*, 333 *note*  
 Goethe, quoted, on Rome, 215  
 Gonzaga, Federico, son of the Marquis of Mantua, sent to Rome as hostage, 94; favourite companion of the Pope, 246, 250; his position in Rome, 251-3; his portrait by Raffaello, 252 *note*; nephew of Alfonso d'Este, 262 *note*  
 Gonzaga, Francesco, Marquis of Mantua, member of the League of Cambray, 218; continues hostilities against the Venetians and is taken prisoner, 250; his wife secures his

release, 250, 251; letters of Stazio Gadio to him, 251 *note*, 267  
 Gonzaga, Isabella. (See Este.)  
 Gozzoli, Benozzo, 288  
 Gregory VII. (Hildebrand), buried at Salerno, 42 *note*  
 Gregory of Tours, quoted, 34  
 Gringoire, Pierre, French pamphleteer, 256 *and note*  
 Grossino, Mantuan, in the suite of Federico Gonzaga, quoted, 246-48, 251, 252 *and note*, 262 *and note*  
 Grotta Ferrata, monastery of, 130  
 Guicciardini, Francesco, Italian historian, 241, 242 *note*  
 Guicciardini, Jacopo, on the sack of Prato, 343 *note*  
 Guido, influenced by Raffaello, 332  
 Guillaume de Marsillat, his painted glass, 108, 215  
 Gurk, bishop of, Maximilian's ambassador to Rome, his arrogance and insolent departure, 266; favourably received by the Pope on his return, 266, 267; his presence at the Lateran Council, 268

## H

Heineken, quoted, 301 *note*  
*Hercules*, antique marble, 138  
*Hermeneia*, the, 347 *and note*  
*Hermes*, antique marble, 83  
*Holy Family* of the Louvre, by Raffaello, 336, 337  
*Holy Night*, Correggio's, 337  
*Homme obstiné, l'*, French satire on Julius II., 256  
*Horse-Tamers*, antique marble, 78, 90, 143  
 Humanism, its special cult, 12  
 Humanists, their success and insolence, 2, 3; free-thinkers, 3; papal attitude towards, 3, 4  
 Hutten, Ulrich von, his *Description of Julius II.*, 232, 233

## I

*Ignudi*, the, frescos of the Sistine, 315, 316 *note*

*Imbrattature* of the Vatican frescos, 215, 216

Incendio, Stanza del, Perugino's ceiling in, 155

*Incoronata*, Raffaello's, 191

Inghirami, Tommaso (Fedra), papal librarian, his portrait by Raffaello, 66, 180, 181; his likeness in an ex-voto in the Lateran, 181, 182; his death, 182; reads Maximilian's letter at the Lateran Council, 268

Indulgences, sale of, censured by a cardinal, 26

Innocent VIII. (Cibo), friendly to Cardinal della Rovere, 9; his tomb in S. Peter's, 38 *note*, 44, 111; separates the court of the *Signatura* into two sections, 176

Isabella d'Este, Marchesa di Mantua. (See Este.)

*Italienische Reise*, Goethe's, 215

## J

Jacopo della Quercia, his influence on Michelangelo, 80, 81; an impassioned sculptor, 109

Job, Book of, quoted, 317

Julius II. (Giuliano della Rovere, Franciscan monk, bishop of Ostia, cardinal of San Pietro in Vincoli), nephew of Sixtus IV., his position during his uncle's reign, 8, 9; twice defeated candidate for the papal throne, finally elected, 10; residence in France, 10, 106, 130; lifelong hostility between him and the Borgias, 10, 151; *il pontefice terribile*, 10 *and note*; unappreciated by Macchiavelli, 10-12; his successful campaign against Perugia and

Bologna, 11, 47, 48, 319; his proposed tomb, 12-18, 49, 60, 357, 358 *and note*, 362, 363 *and note*; personal relations with Michelangelo, 12, 13, 48, 49, 51, 53-5, 62, 227, 228, 274; proposes to rebuild S. Peter's, 18-22; is opposed by the cardinals and the Roman public, 19, 20; employs Bramante, 24, 129; lays corner-stone of the new Basilica, 26, 27; great collector of antiques, 79, 82, 83, 138, 139 *and note*, 140; his interest in S. M. del Popolo, where he erects two monuments, 104, 106-11; not a very good Franciscan, 105; a great builder, 129, 130; Sangallo long his favourite architect, 131; later, prefers Bramante, 131-41; his inscription over a door in the court of the Belvedere, 135 *note*; abandons the *appartamento Borgia*, and selects instead the "Upper Rooms," 151; orders Bramante to superintend their decoration, 152, 153; receives Raffaello and entrusts to him the decoration of the Stanze, 156, 158; his portraits in the Stanze, 212-4, 245 *note*, 268, 269, 273, 320, 326, 327, 333; author of the League of Cambrai, 218 *and note*; lays Venice under interdict, 219; absolves the Republic, 219-21; which offends the members of the League, 221, 222; excommunicates the Duke of Ferrara, 223; begins war with France, 223-5; makes Bologna his headquarters, 225, 226; is taken ill, 228, 229; recovers, and joins the army before Mirandola, 229-31; his portrait in the Bruschi palace, Corneto, 230, 231 *note*; enters Mirandola, 231; returns victorious

Julius II.—*Continued*

to Bologna, 232; much criticised by European public, 233, 234; at Ravenna hears of the recapture of Bologna and the murder of Alidosi, 235; returns to Rome, 242; Council against him at Pisa, 242; Emperor hopes to supersede him on the papal throne, 243; he convokes Council of the Lateran, and excommunicates sharers in the Council of Pisa, 243, 244; overtures made him by Louis XII., 244, 245; organises the Holy League against France, 245; his daily life and amusements, 245-8, 273, 274; borrows money, pawning the *regno*, 246, 247; his sudden violent illness, 248, 252; the Roman princes attempt an insurrection, 248, 249; he recovers, learns of the attempt, but does not punish, 249, 250, 253 *and note*; his affection for Federico Gonzaga, 250-3; completes organisation of the Holy League and plans campaign against France, 253, 254; is dissatisfied with other members of the League, 254, 255; his army defeated at Ravenna, 256-8, 342; cardinals implore him to negotiate with France, 258; his unexpected successes and the withdrawal of the French from Italy, 258-60, 343; grants absolution sought by the Duke of Ferrara, but deprives him of territory, 260-3; is gracious towards the Emperor, who, in return, joins the Holy League, 265; opens the Lateran Council, 265; prorogues it for six months, and reopens it, 265-8; gains great victory for the papacy, 268; attends mass in the Sistine Chapel, opened for a few days, 274; probably sug-

gests the *Mass of Bolsena* in memory of a vow made at Orvieto, 319; intends the second Stanza to be devoted to the commemoration of his reign, 321; his dealings with Florence, 342; carnival procession pays homage to him, 360-2; his fatal illness and last directions to Paris de Grassis, 362, 363; his last bull, founding the Capella Julia, 363 *and note*; bids farewell to the cardinals, 364, 365; his death and burial, 366; Macchiavelli's testimony to him, 365, 366 *and note*

Justi, biographer of Winckelmann and of Velasquez, his discovery as to the Apollo, 82 *note*

## L

*Lamento*, defined, 160 *note*

*Laocoon*, the, antique marble, discovery of, 93; object of intense admiration, 94; its remarkable merit, 94, 95; its influence upon Michelangelo, 95, 96, 98, 138, 146-283, 303

La Palice, French general in Italy, 259

*Laude Sion*, famous hymn, 318, 319, 326

League of Cambrai, its aim, 218, 220; Julius II., its author, 218 *note*; papal interdict upon Venice a condition of it, 219, 220

League, the Holy, proclaimed by Julius II. in the church of Santa Maria del Popolo, 104; its formation, 253, 254; its *carro* in the carnival procession of 1513, 361

Leo X. (Giovanni de' Medici), his characterisation of Michelangelo, 10 *note*; his *mot* on Lionardo, 154 *note*; his portrait in the *Decretals*, 212; always

Leo X.—*Continued*

- represented shaven, 236 *note*, 321 *note*; La Magliana his favourite hunting-lodge, 238; at the battle of Ravenna, 257; his white horse, 257 *note*; his decoration of the church in Bolsena, 319 *note*; substituted his own portrait for that of Julius II., in *Attila's Retreat*, 334; his portrait by Raffaello, 337; appointed legate, 342; his letter after the sack of Prato, 343
- Lesueur, French painter, influenced by Raffaello, 332
- Lion devouring a horse*, antique marble, favourite of Michelangelo, 80 *note*
- Lionardo da Vinci, his intention of taking service with the Sultan, 52; insulted by Michelangelo, 56; in the employ of Lodovico il Moro, 70; a vagrant artist, 72, 74; never in Rome during Julius II.'s pontificate, 153, 154 *and note*; Leo X.'s sarcasm on his indolence, 154 *note*; points of superiority to Raffaello, 158, 159; character of his work, 188; his *Last Supper*, 191
- Lippo Lippi, his appeal to Piero de' Medici, 72; his work in Prato, 343
- Loggie of the Vatican, *Raffaello's Bible*, 288
- Lo Spagno, fellow-pupil with Raffaello, 159
- Lomazzo, 341 *and note*
- Lorenzetti, Ambrogio, his great frescos in Siena, 184, 185
- Lotto, Lorenzo, painter of the Stanze before Raffaello, 153; dismissed by Julius II., 156; his portrait of Pompeo Colonna, 249 *note*; Raffaello's regard for his work, 338 *note*
- Louis XII., King of France, member of the League of Cambray, 218; his action on

removal of the Venetian interdiction, 222, 223; his previous double-dealing, 222 *note*; summons synod of French clergy, 223; Julius II.'s retaliation, 224 *and note*, 225; the Pope takes the field against him, 225-33; instigates the calling of a council against Julius II., 242; opens negotiation with the Pope, 244; the Holy League is organised against him, 253, 254; gains disastrous victory at Ravenna, 256, 257; recalls his troops from Italy, 259

Luther, Martin, in Rome, 327-9 *and note*

Luzio, author of *Federico Gonzaga, ostaggio*, 139 *note*; quoted, 253 *note*, 262 *and note*, 263 *note*

## M

Maccabees, Book of the, quoted, 330

Macchiavelli, Florentine envoy at Rome, his admiration for Cesare Borgia, 10; fails to appreciate Julius II., 10-12; his comment on the French war against the Pope, 244, 245; his *Ordinanza*, 343; his testimony to Julius II.'s character, 366 *and note*

Maddaleni, Fausto, on Alidosi, 241 *and note*

*Madonna di Foligno*, painted by Raffaello for Sigismondo de' Conti, 180

Maitani, Lorenzo, 319

Manetti, biographer of Nicholas V., 20, 21 *note*

Mantegna, Andrea, attached to the Court of Ferrara, 71; point of inferiority to Michelangelo, 75, 112; his frescos in the Belvedere, 135 *and note*; his *Deposizione*, 162; his *Paranassus*, 206

- Mantua, Congress of, its decrees, 343
- Maratta, Carlo, "restorer" of Raffaello's paintings, 215, 326
- Margaret, Governess of the Netherlands, 243, 259
- Masaccio, chapel in the Carmine decorated by him, 67; his faults of composition, 166; splendid technique, 185; character of his painting, 188; his *Eve*, 296, 297
- Masolino, his *Eve* in the Brancacci chapel, 296
- Mass of Bolsena*, fresco of the Stanza di Eliodoro, 319; its portrait of Julius II. and other contemporaries, 325; a work of great power, 326, 327; highly dramatic, 335; remarkable colour-effects, 336-8
- Maturanzo, Perugino's adviser in the Cambio, 179, 219
- Mausoleum of Julius II., inception of the plan, 12; its details, 13-17; question of its site, 18; work on it abandoned, 23, 24, 27; resumed, 358, 359; last wishes of Julius II. in regard to it, 363; question as to plans, 363 *note*
- Maximilian, the Emperor, a member of the League of Cambray, 218; had plundered Venice, 219; truce with Venice and subsequent treachery to her, 221; his anger on removal of Venetian interdict, 221, 222; joins France against the Pope, 242; has the idea of becoming Pope himself, 243, 254; Julius II.'s opinion of him, 254; Pope's complaisance towards him, 265-7; his docility, 267, 268
- Medici, the family, exiled from Florence, and afterwards restored, 269, 343
- Medici, Cosimo de' (*Pater Patriæ*), his remark on government, 2
- Medici, Giovanni de'. (*See* Leo X.)
- Medici, Giovanni de' (*delle Bande nere*), son of Caterina Sforza, 6
- Medici, Giuliano de', Michelangelo seeks his protection, 345 *note*, 346
- Medici, Giulio de'. (*See* Clement VII.)
- Medici, Lorenzo de' (the Magnificent), imprisons Raffaello Riario, 7; his collection of antiquities, and school of art established by him (the Medicean Garden), 52, 79, 80, 109
- Medici, Piero de', patron of Lippo Lippi, 72
- Melozzo da Forlì, his fresco of Sixtus IV., 1, 2 and *notes*, 5-9, 23, *note*; fragments of his work in Rome and chapel at Loretto, 5 *note*; his fresco of Sixtus IV. Raffaello's model for the *Decretals*, 212
- Michel, Emile, quoted, 236 and *note*
- Michelangelo Buonarroti, first visit to Rome, 7; his *Cupid*, 7, 86, 87 and *note*, 92; proposed tomb for Julius II., 12-17 and *notes*; personal relations with the Pope, 12, 13, 23, 48, 49, 51, 53-5, 62, 227, 228, 274; hostility towards Bramante, 12, 23, 50; *Bound Captives*, of the Louvre, 14, 15, 358; *Moses*, 15, 82, 358, 359; at Carrara, 17, 18; quotations from his Sonnets, 17, 52, 53 *note*; returns to Rome, 22; refuses to paint the Sistine vault, 23; escapes from Rome, 27; the *Pietà*, 37 *note*, 84-6, 88-90; cartoon of the *War of Pisa*, 50, 51; meets the Pope at Bologna, 53; is cordially received, 54; makes bronze statue of Julius II., 54-7; his ill-temper towards other artists, 55, 56, 59, 117,

Michelangelo—*Continued*

118 *and note*, 341 *and note*; indifference towards the statue at Bologna, 58; is again ordered to paint the Sistine vault, 60; agrees to do this, 61; his letter to Fattucci, 60, 61; begins painting, 61 *and note*; is visited by the Pope, 60, 61; complains of him, 62-4; claims kinship with the Canossa family, 64; letter to his nephew quoted, 64 *note*; his personal appearance, 65; likenesses of him, 65 *and note*; his irritable temper, 67 *and note*, 68; his kindness and generosity, 68, 69; his personal and family pride, 69, 70; indifference towards his papal patrons, 70 *note*; his personal character, 73, 74; himself the great *Penseroso* of the Renaissance, 74; as artist, 74-6; the *Centaur*, 76; question of Jacopo della Quercia's influence, 80; the *Angel of the Candelabra*, the *Giovannino*, *Adonis*, 81 *note*; influenced by Savonarola, 87, 88, 279, 280-3, 292; *Bacchus*, 87 *and note*, 92; early phase of his art, *Madonna* of Bruges, *Madonna and Child*, *S. John*, 89; his ruling esthetic principles derived from classic models, 90, 91-3; his *David*, 91, 92; witnessed the disinterring of the *Laocoon*, 93; his life in the Sistine, 96, 216, 341, 344-7; his *Capitani*, 114; sepulchral monument for himself, 115, 116 *and note*; hatred of Sangallo, praise of Bramante's plan for S. Peter's, 118 *note*; points of superiority to Raffaello, 158, 159; sometimes his inferior in composition, 166; in need of money, follows the Pope to his camp, 227; som-

bre character of his letters, 227, 228; his early difficulties in painting on plaster, 270-71; employs assistants, then dismisses them, 271 *and note*; question as to sequence in execution of the frescos, 272 *and note*; after three years' work, opens the chapel for a short time, 274; his plan of the Sistine frescos, 286-312, 347-54; his indifference to literature and philosophy in his work, 306-8; impressive personality of his figures, 308-10; again at work in the chapel, 342; his patriotic distress and filial anxiety, 344-7, 352, 353; completion of the Sistine frescos, 356, 357; his resentment towards Julius II., 357, 358; resumes work on figures for the Sepultura, 358, 359  
 Mignante, quoted, 19  
 Mino da Fiesole, 72, 76  
*Mirabilia*, Albertini's, 144, 145 *and note*  
 Mirandola, siege of, 229, 230 *and note*; capture of the fortress, 231 *and note*, 232; recovery by Ferrara, 235  
 Monreale, Cathedral of, 347  
 Montégut, Emile, quoted, 289 *and note*, 294  
 Monuments, sepulchral, mediæval plan of, 110; Sansovino's innovations, 110, 111; their general plan in the Renaissance, 113-15; their immense place in art, 116  
 Mosaics, early Christian, 41  
*Moses*, Michelangelo's, 16, 234, 304, 305, 309; object of veneration to the Roman Jews, 283 *note*  
 Müntz, Eugène, 274 *note*  
 Museum of the Capitol, founded by Nicholas V., first public museum in Italy, 5; enriched by Sixtus IV., 79

Museum of the Vatican, enriched by Julius II., 79, 134, 138, 139 *and note*

## N

*Narthex*, the, 32 *and note*, 33  
*Navicella*, Giotto's, 41, 44  
 Nepotism, introduced by Sixtus IV., 5  
*Nicchione* of the Vatican, designed by Bramante, 136; sole remnant of the *porticus Julia*, 136, 137  
 Nicholas V. (Thomas of Sarzana), adorned the old Basilica, 20, 211; his tomb in the *grotte Vaticane*, 44, 110; founder of the Capitoline Museum, 79; original Belvedere built by him, 136; occupied the "Upper Rooms" of the Vatican, 152

## O

Obelisk of the piazza di San Pietro, 30 *and note*  
 Oddi, Maddalena degli, early patroness of Raffaello, 157 *note*, 164  
*Opus Alexandrinum*, in the Segnatura, with Leo X.'s two devices, 174; in the Sistine Chapel, made from fragments of early Christian tombs, 284  
 Orcagna, in what respect Michelangelo's superior, 76  
 Orvieto, Cathedral of, 162, 319  
 Ostia, its ground full of antique marbles, 79; fortress built there by Julius II., 130  
 Otho II., Emperor, his tomb in S. Peter's, 43, 44

## P

Palaces of the Cardinals, mentioned by Albertini, 146 *and note*  
 "Palaces of the Emperors," 142  
 Palla, Battista della, Michelangelo's letter to, 50

*Pandects*, the, fresco of the Segnatura, a total wreck, 214  
*Pange lingua*, famous hymn, 318, 319  
 Pantheon, Bramante's model for S. Peter's dome, 18, 19; Hadrian's building, not Agrippa's, 19 *note*  
 Paris de Grassis, Julius II.'s master of ceremonies, 22; on the rebuilding of S. Peter's, 22, 26, 27; on Bramante, 25; on the "Upper Rooms," 151; on Alexander VI., 151 *note*; on the *appartamento Borgia*, 152 *note*; on Julius II.'s entrance into Bologna, 232; on Alidosi, 241, 242 *and note*; on the expulsion of the French from Italy, 259, 260; on the first reopening of the Sistine Chapel, 274 *and note*; on the Vespers of Orvieto, 319 *and note*; on the final re-opening of the Sistine, 356, 357; on the last illness of Julius II., 362  
*Parnasso*, *il*, fresco of the Segnatura, its graceful composition, 205, 206; a true picture of high society in the Renaissance, 206, 207; figures represented, 207, 208; classic influence shown in it, 209; its soft colouring, 337  
 Parthenon, unknown to the Renaissance, 99  
 Paschal II., Santa Maria del Popolo founded in his reign, 104  
 Pasquino, 128 *and note*  
 Paul II. (Barbo), his hostility to the humanists, 3; his collection of antiques, 29; his tomb in Sant' Andrea della Valle, 38; his tiara, the *regno*, 246, 247  
 Paul III. (Farnese), hall of the Cancelleria decorated in his honour by Vasari, 65 *note*; his conversation with Michelangelo, 80 *note*; his tomb in S. Peter's, 114; his alterations in

- Paul III.—*Continued*  
 the Vatican Palace, 174 *note*;  
 his portrait in the *Decretals*,  
 213
- Paul V. (Borghese), demolition  
 of old S. Peter's completed in  
 his pontificate, 22; first Pope  
 to wear the Henri IV. beard,  
 234 *note*
- Pazzi, conspiracy of the, 2, 7,  
 342
- Pensieroso*, *il*, of the Medicean  
 Chapel, 304, 305, 309
- Pensieroso*, Michelangelo the  
 great, of the Renaissance, 74
- Perino del Vaga, his *grisailles*  
 in the *Segnatura*, 178
- Perugino, *il* (Pietro Vannucci),  
 ill-will of Michelangelo to-  
 wards him, 67; reputed an  
 unbeliever, 72; his vagabond  
 humour, 74; early work in  
 the Stanze, 153; ceiling in the  
 Stanza del Incendio, 155;  
 friendly relations with Raf-  
 faello, 158; early master of  
 Raffaello, 159; his *Deposi-*  
*zione* in Florence, 162; his  
 Cambio in Perugia, 177-9,  
 209; his influence upon Raf-  
 faello, 187; his likeness in the  
*Disputa*, 212; his fresco in the  
 Sistina, 284
- Peruzzi, Baldassare, his supposed  
 portrait in the *Chastisement*  
*of Heliодorus*, 333 *note*
- Peter Martyr disapproves of  
 Julius II.'s bulls, 233
- Petrucchio, Cardinal Alfonso, his  
 plot against Leo X., 7; his  
 death, 8
- Piazza di San Pietro, fresco re-  
 presenting, 45, 46
- Piermaria da Pescia, his intag-  
 lio, 304 *note*
- Piero della Francesca, his work  
 in the Stanze before Raffaello,  
 152; his wonderful technique,  
 185; his chiaroscuro, 337, 338
- Pietà*, defined, 160 *note*
- Pietà*, early statue of Michel-  
 angelo, its original place, 37  
*note*; its present position  
 unfortunate, 84; its classic  
 simplicity, suggested by the  
 Apollo, 84-6; its character of  
 gentle emotion, 86; kinship  
 with the *Madonna* of Bruges,  
 and *Reliefs* of the Bargello,  
 89, 90; an exceptional inci-  
 dent in Michelangelo's career,  
 90; resemblance of the Ma-  
 donna to a figure in the Sistine  
 frescos, 350
- Pietà*, statue made late in life  
 by Michelangelo, intended  
 for his own tomb, 115, 116  
*and note*
- Pigna* of the Vatican, men-  
 tioned by Dante, 32, 33
- Pinturicchio (Bernardino di Bet-  
 to), his frescos in S. M. del  
 Popolo, 108, 308 *note*; draw-  
 ings copied by Raffaello, 159;  
 faults of composition, 167;  
 frescos in the *appartamento*  
*Borgia*, 197; in the Sistina,  
 284
- Pisani, Venetian envoy at Rome,  
 219
- Pisano, Andrea, his reliefs in  
 the Battisterio, 209, 210
- Pisano, Niccolò, his pulpit in  
 Siena, 196
- Pius II. (Piccolomini), builder  
 of the Loggia of the Benedic-  
 tions, 31; his tomb in San An-  
 dra della Valle, 38 *note*, 39,  
 110
- Platina, Bartolommeo, Libra-  
 rian of the Vatican, in Me-  
 lozzo's fresco, 2, 4; his im-  
 prisonment, 3; restoration to  
 favour, 4
- Poggio, Bracciolini, his essay on  
 Rome, 77, 147
- Pollajuolo, Antonio, his tomb  
 of Innocent VIII. in S. Peter's,  
 38 *note*, 44, 111; his tomb of  
 Sixtus IV., 38 *note*, 336 *and*  
*note*; his *David*, 91, 92; early  
 teacher of Michelangelo, 109



Pomponius Leto, 3  
 Poussin, French painter, influenced by Raffaello, 332  
 Prato, sack of, 343, 365  
*Prophets* of the Sistina, Michelangelo's, 304-12 *and notes*  
 Propylæa, palace of the Acciaiuoli in Athens, 99  
 Pucci, Lorenzo, Julius II.'s executor, 363  
 Puccio, Pietro di, his frescos in the Campo Santo of Pisa, 288, 293  
*Putti* of the Sistina, Michelangelo's, 315, 316

## Q

Quercia, Jacopo della, 293

## R

Raffaello Santi, of Urbino, a pupil of Perugino, 51; painter of many portraits, 65, 66, 212-14; disliked by Michelangelo, 66, 67, 118 *and note*; his sonnet, 73 *and note*; his first arrival in Rome, 150; preceding year had sought introduction to Soderini, 156 *and note*; receives commission from Julius II. to paint the Vatican Stanze, probably introduced by the Duke of Urbino, 156, 157; first audience at the Vatican an important date in the world's history, 158; his inferiority at certain points to Michelangelo, to Lionardo, to Titian, to Giotto, to Fra Angelico, 158, 159; surpasses all other painters of the Renaissance in two respects, 159; sense of beauty innate with him, but gift of composition of slow development, 159, 160; his early fresco, the *Deposizione* of the Borghese Gallery carefully studied, but cold and lacking in unity,

160-64; faults of his *Incoronata*, 165; composition of his *Sposalizio* due to Perugino, 165 *and note*; sudden and unaccountable development of power of composition shown in the *Disputa*, 165-9; his amiable character, 178, 322, 324, 325; in arrangement of the Stanza, follows Perugino's *Cambio*, and introduces his former master's portrait as an acknowledgment of indebtedness, 177-9, but in the conception of the Stanza, far surpasses Perugino, 179; question of assistance from learned contemporaries, 179-83; more probably inspired by the great Trecentisti, 183-5; and adds to this the intelligence and resources of the high Renaissance, 185; Christian art's greatest genius, 194; the *Scuola d'Atene* an old theme, carried out with marvellous originality, power, and splendour, 196-205; feels the influence of the classic world, 210; introduces many portraits of contemporaries, 212-14; his admiration for Michelangelo's Sistine frescos, 279; his ceiling in the Stanza di Eliodoro testifies to it, 321-5; his progress in dramatic power, in colouring, and in the use of picturesque effects shown in the second Stanza, 335-8; Michelangelo's slur on him, 338 *note*  
 Raimondo, Marcantonio, his engravings of Raffaello's drawings, 168; his engraving of the *Benediction of Noah*, 319 *note*; his portrait in the *Chastisement of Heliodorus*, 333 *note*  
 Ravenna, battle of, 257 *and notes*, 258

- Regno*, the, Paul II.'s tiara, 247
- Relics, the Great, in S. Peter's, 37
- Republic proclaimed by Roman princes, 214
- Retreat of Attila*, fresco of the Stanza di Eliodoro, representation of Leo X. in place of Julius II., 334; intense dramatic action of, 335, 336
- Riario, Girolamo, favourite nephew of Sixtus IV., his career and death, 5, 6; husband of Caterina Sforza, 6 *note*; hostility to Giuliano della Rovere, 9
- Riario, Raffaello, 6; made Cardinal di San Giorgio, 7; his ostentatious life, 7, 328; his death, 8; his palace, now the Cancellaria, 8 *note*
- Risarcimento* of Vatican frescos, 215, 216
- Roselli, Cosimo, his fresco in the Sistina, 284
- Rota porphyretica* in S. Peter's, 33, 42
- Rovere, Domenico, Cardinal of San Clemente, his palace in Rome, 239
- Rovere, Francesco della. (*See* Sixtus IV.)
- Rovere, Francesco Maria della, favourite nephew of Julius II., inherits Urbino, 6; in command of papal army, 226; his supposed likeness in the *Scuola d' Atene*, 226 *note*; assassinates Alidosi, 235; commended by public sentiment, 241 *and note*; excommunicated by Julius II., and afterwards absolved, 250
- Rovere, Giovanna della, 156 *note*
- Rovere, Giovanni della, ancestor of the Dukes of Urbino, 6
- Rovere, Giuliano della. (*See* Julius II.)
- S
- Sabadino degli Arienti, 94
- Sack, of Prato, 343, 365; of Rome, 215, 332
- Sacrosanctæ*, Julius II.'s bull convoking the Lateran Council, 243
- Sadoletto, his praise of the *Laocoon*, 94
- Sagre grotte Vaticane*, 33, 38 *and note*, 44
- Saint-Gelais, quoted, 219
- Saint George*, Raffaello's, 336
- San Biagio, design of, 132; its remains, 132 *note*
- Sangallo, Francesco da, letter concerning discovery of the *Laocoon*, 93
- Sangallo, Giuliano Giamberti da, Michelangelo's correspondence with, 48, 49, 58; superseded with Julius II. by Bramante, 131; consulted as to the Sistina, 271
- Sansovino, Andrea Contucci da, his work in S. M. del Popolo, 59, 60, 209; character of his work, 113, 114; his *Baptism of Christ*, 209
- Sant' Angelo, castle of, 3, 8, 249, 258
- Santo Corporale*, miracle of the, 335
- Santo Volto*, altar of, in S. Peter's, 37, 45
- Saturn, temple of, 77, 78
- Savonarola, his influence on Michelangelo, 88, 279, 280-3, 292; his portrait in the *Disputa*, 193, 194; peculiarity of his preaching, 279-82
- Schmarsow, A., his *Melozzo da Forlì*, 5 *note*; his edition of Albertini, 145 *note*
- Scuola d' Atene*, fresco of the Segnatura, devoted to the "Liberal Arts," 195, 196; a well-known theme, 196-8; its seven traditional parts, 198-200; personages represented,

*Scuola d' Atene—Continued*

200-203; the two central figures, 203-205; contains representation of the new S. Peter's, 205

Sebastiano del Piombo, great portrait painter, 66; "restorer" of Vatican frescos, 215; his criticism of Raffaello, 237 *and note*; question of his collaboration with Raffaello, 238 *and note*

Segnatura Stanza della, its paintings bound together by a common thought, 166; why so called, 172-7; pavement, 174; decoration modelled after Perugino's Cambio, 177-9; design of its frescos purely original, 179, 180; the development of a great thought of the Trecento, 182-5; marvellous composition of the cycle, 185; the medallions of the ceiling, 186, 187; an imposing ideal of universal harmony, 216; its unequalled charm, 335

Sepet, Marius, his work on the Prophets of Christ, 312 *note*

Sforza, Cardinal Ascanio Maria, his career and death, 106-8; his tomb in S. M. del Popolo, 106, 109-11

Sforza, Caterina, widow of Girolamo Riario, marries Giovanni de' Medici, 6 *and note*

Sforza, Lodovico (il Moro), Duke of Milan, patron of Lionardo da Vinci, 71, 72, 107; his career and downfall, 106, 107

Sforza, Zenobia, wife of Griffonetto Baglioni, 161

*Sibyls*: Raffaello's, of the Pace, 211, 324; Michelangelo's, of the Sistina, 304, 306-12 *and notes*; Pinturicchio's, of S. M. del Popolo, 308 *note*

*Signatura*, great ecclesiastical court of appeal, 176

Signorelli, Luca, Michelangelo's rudeness towards, 67, 68 *and note*; his *grisaille* of the *Deposizione*, 162; his faults of composition, 167; his fresco in the Sistina, 284

*Simia*, the, quoted, 138 *note*

Sistina, Capella, Julius II. determines to have the ceiling painted by Michelangelo, 23, 50, 51, 60, 61; beginning of the work, 61; a visit to the balcony of the chapel, 97-102; chapel closed for work for three years, 272, 273; opened for a few days, 273, 274 *and note*; entire decoration consists of human figures, 275, 276, 314, 315; absolute originality of the work, 276, 277; a simulated architecture with imaginative decoration, historic scenes overhead, and colossal isolated figures on the slopes, 278; immense power of the work at once recognised by all, 279; the Capella built by Sixtus IV., 283; its architecture extremely simple, 284; suite of frescos below the windows, by painters of the Quattrocento, represent the *Life of Moses* and the *Life of Christ*, 284, 285; employment of six famous painters for this cycle the suggestion of Cardinal della Rovere, 285, 286; historic scenes of the ceiling represent the *Creation*, *Paradise*, and the *Deluge*, 289-302; chapel dedicated to the Madonna, 292 *note*; biblical scenes at angles of ceiling, 302-4; *Prophets* and *Sibyls* on the slopes of the vault, 304-12; physical discomfort of viewing the ceiling, 313, 314; completion of the historic paintings, the *Ancestors of Christ*, 347-53; singular child-

Sistina—*Continued*

- ish figures in the lunettes, 353, 354; Julius II.'s criticism, 354; chapel opened finally on the eve of All Saints, 356, 357
- Sixtus IV. (della Rovere), in Melozzo's fresco, 1, 2; friendly to the humanists, 3; began the restoration of Rome, 4, 5, 9, 145; originator of nepotism, 6; crowned on the terrace of the old Basilica, 22; his tomb in S. Peter's, 38 *note*, 39, 44, 336 *and note*; S. M. del Popolo his favourite church, 104; his portrait in the *Disputa*, 192 *note*; founder of the Sistine Chapel, 283; a great theologian and author of a book, 283
- Sixtus V. (Peretti), moved the obelisk of the Vatican, 30 *note*; his arms on the ceiling of the Sala di Costantino, 175
- Soderini, gonfalonier of Florence, his advice to Michelangelo, 51, 53; Raffaello begs introduction from him, 156 *and note*; an eminent peace-maker, 342
- Sodoma (Gianantonio Bazzi), his early work in the Vatican Stanze, 153; minor paintings of ceilings of the Stanze, 155 *and note*; dismissed by Julius II., 156; influenced by Raffaello's work, 332
- Spanish Chapel, frescos of the, 184, 194, 195
- Spasimo*, Raffaello's, its faults of colouring, 337
- Speculum Humanæ Salvationis*, quoted, 301 *note*
- Springer, quoted, 301 *note*
- Stanze, the Vatican, also called *Camerae Superiores* (Stanza della Segnatura, Stanza di Eliodoro, Stanza del Incendio, and Sala di Costantino) selected for residence

- by Julius II., 151, 152; their early decoration, 152; ordered renewed under direction of Bramante, 152, 153; this work interrupted, painters dismissed, and decoration entrusted entirely to Raffaello, 156; first Stanza completed, 274; two walls of the second Stanza incomplete at the time of Julius II.'s death, 321, 333, 334
- Stazio Gadio, his letters to the Mantuan court, 251 *note*, 267
- Swiss Guards, first employed by Julius II., their uniform, 224 *and note*; in the *Mass of Bolsena*, 269
- Swiss mercenaries, employed by Julius II., 254, 255, 259
- Symonds, J. Addington, quoted, 67 *note*

## T

- Temperantia*, Perugino's, in the Cambio, 209; Raffaello's, in the Segnatura, 210
- Theatre of Marcellus, 78, 328
- Three Graces*, antique marble, 146
- Three Vows of S. Francis*, fresco, 184
- Tiber*, antique marble, 96, 139 *and note*, 247 *note*
- Titian, criticised by Michelangelo, 66; in colouring superior to Raffaello, 158; his visit to Rome, 215 *and note*
- Torrigiano, his quarrel with Michelangelo, 67
- Torso*, antique marble, greatly admired by Michelangelo, 96, 98, 283
- Tournon, Comte de, French Prefect of Rome, 29
- Trajan's Column, admired by Michelangelo, 80 *note*; its reliefs suggested medallions of the Sistina, 315 *note*

- Transfiguration*, Raffaello's, its composition faulty, 191; colouring poor, 337
- Trecentisti, their influence upon Raffaello, 183-5
- Trevisano, Venetian ambassador at Rome, 218
- Tricarico, bishop of, letter quoted, 253 *note*
- Triumph of Death*, 184
- Trivulzio, Francesca, defends Mirandola, 229; surrenders the fortress, 231; recovers it, 235
- Trivulzio, Jean Jacques, French general in Italy, 234; occupies Bologna and repulses papal army, 235; is recalled to Milan, 244
- U
- Uccello, Paolo, his naturalism superficial, 75; his biblical scenes, 288; his frescos in the *Chiosstro Verde*, 293
- "Upper Rooms" of the Vatican, (*See Stanze.*)
- Urban IV., instituted the festival of Corpus Domini, 318; represented, in the *Mass of Bolsena*, by Julius II., 325
- Urbino, Duke of, Guidubaldo da Montefeltri, bequeaths Urbino to Francesco Maria della Rovere, 6, 235
- Urbino, Duke of. (*See Rovere.*)
- V
- Vannucci, Pietro. (*See Perugino.*)
- Vasari, quoted, 136, 138 *note*, 185, 201, 205, 208, 277 *note*, 283, 315 *note*, 326 *and note*, 331 *and note*, 333 *note*, 337, 340, 354, 359; a valuable authority, 171, 172
- Vatican Basilica. (*See, under Churches*, San Pietro in Vaticano).
- Vatican Library, founded by Sixtus IV., 1; date of its foundation, 2 *and note*; first public library in Italy, 5
- Vatican Palace, alterations made in it by Nicholas V., 135; by Julius II., 135-41; by Paul III., Paul V., and Alexander VI., 174 *note*
- Vaticanus, the hill, its early history, 29, 30
- Venice, the League of Cambrai against, 218; interdict laid upon, 219; her defeat and submission, 219, 220; interdict removed, 220, 221; truce with the Emperor, 221; ally of the Pope against France, 224
- Venus Felix*, antique marble, 139 *and note*
- Venus of Melos*, antique marble, 83, 139
- Verocchio, his *Judith*, 302
- Vico, Giambattista, quoted, 203
- Violin-player*, Raffaello's, 337
- Vittori, Francesco, his letter to Michelangelo, 224
- Voltaire, his resemblance to a personage in the *Disputa*, 203
- W
- William of Marsillat, his painted glass in S. M. del Popolo, 108; in the *Segnatura*, 215
- Wilson, C. H., his *Life and Works* of Michelangelo, 15, 16, 81 *note*
- Wölflin, 287 *note*
- Wrappers*, antique marble, 80 *note*

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